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A. J. WILLIAM MYERS Ph.D.

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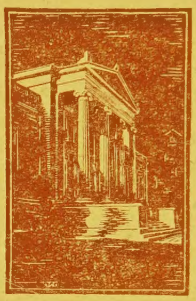

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WHAT IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

What is Religious Education?

A Constructive Study

By

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Dedicated to my Wife
who is a continual inspiration and strength
and who has helped me to see the beauty
of human life and the essential
qualities of Christian
character.

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CHAPTER I.

Religious Education Defined.

FROM the earliest times religious education has been carried on. No people has ever been found anywhere at any time who did not have a religion and who did not teach, especially to the younger generation, what they believed to be the best way of life. Clan and tribal customs, mores, religious practices, initiation ceremonies, indicate how universal is the teaching of religion among primitive peoples, while the Church, temple, mosque, and shrine among the more developed peoples tell their own story.

It is perfectly clear that, if a tribe or people is to preserve its skills, traditions, and beliefs, it must teach them diligently to the children and youth. That is self-evident as soon as one thinks of the history of mankind. It is true of every line of thought and activity. If ever an art was perfected or truths discovered and kept secret they perished with their possessors. Intuitively people know this. Almost every new religious cult or

radically different political or social creed that develops leads to the organisation of schools for teaching the children.

We are sure then, that religious education is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of all human activities. It certainly is the oldest educational activity of the human race. It is based on at least three race characteristics—the impulse to worship; the impulse to pass on to the children the best in the experience of the group; and the impulse to insure the future of the group. In the process of the centuries and milleniums the art of teaching religion has grown and gathered to itself much of the wisdom of the race. The religious teaching of children and youth being considered vital to the life and the future of the group, this art necessarily was most jealously guarded. It embodied much of this most profound experience. Then, again, there grew up vast accumulations of religious teaching, such as that embodied in the Bible, the Koran, the Vedas and cognate literature. The sacred scriptures of the various races and nations with the targums, commentaries, hymns, liturgies, interpretations and expositions comprise, perhaps, the world's most massive literary production.

In religious education, then, is found a race enterprise rooted in unlearned tendencies with all their mighty impelling force representing what has always been considered the vital interests of the group, binding up in itself such motives as awe, reverence, love to God (however interpreted),

love to the children, and tribal or national preservation; developing the art of teaching through untold generations, and building up the greatest body of literature of all time.

But religious education did not become a special "discipline" as a scientific study until within the last twenty or twenty-five years. In this sense it is a new study, but it comes with the most ancient and worthy family history. No other study has richer content, as many human contacts, or more race motives or forces behind it.

Religious education as a discipline or field of investigation includes the study of the science of education and the art of teaching in religion. This, so easily said, has tremendous implications. It involves, for example, the question of what is the aim of religious teaching; what is the most necessary teaching for each year from childhood to the grave; what are the essential principles of education involved; what is the best method of teaching for each age; how may we best organise the work; what are the best agencies; and so on —a vast number of most fascinating and vital questions for every period of human history.

Religious education, as commonly understood, relates only to Christian education, and in this sense alone it will be used in this little book.

A few of the axioms so far recognised in this field may be stated as follows:

1. Jesus' idea of God is the highest conception attained to, and is alone the touchstone and standard of all teaching about God.

2. The aim is to help each person, from the youngest to the oldest, to live in the spirit of Jesus. This implies love to God; love to others; and the continuous reconstruction of society—the Kingdom of God.

3. In religious education, because of the vital importance of the issues involved, only the best methods and materials are acceptable.

There have been many definitions of the aim of religious education, and a good, brief list is given in Prof. George A. Coe's *Social Theory of Religious Education*.[1] His own definition is the most satisfactory. He states the aim as "*Growth of the young toward and into mature and efficient devotion to the democracy of God and happy self-realisation therein.*"[2]

This definition does not exclude adults. It merely places the emphasis where it belongs.

The phrase "democracy of God" has been misunderstood. To some provincial-minded folks living in a republic, "democracy" is taken necessarily to imply an elected head. Of course, if "democracy of God" implies this it is an impossible idea, for God is Ruler and King. But clearly the aim is to bring out the fact that here are found only those who are citizens by their own free choice; that the government is for the good of all; that the chief or ruler is "servant of all." And this is compatible with a King who is not elected, but who is the symbol of spiritual unity. In any case God is God. His absolute Kingship

1. Scribner, 1917.
2. Ibid., p. 55.

cannot be questioned. It may be better, therefore, to retain the New Testament term used by Jesus, the Kingdom of God, or if a new term is preferred, the Commonwealth[1] of God.

A more concrete working definition which helps the every-day officer and teacher may be expressed roughly as follows:—

Religious education aims to help each person achieve his own highest and best life, in fellowship with God, and in co-operation with and in service of his fellows, and to promote a civilisation embodying ever more fully the ideals of Jesus.

It will be noticed that in this definition emphasis is laid upon the following points:

(*a*) Each has his own life to live. No two are alike. Religion helps each to live *his own life* to the fullest and best.

(*b*) This is only possible through intimate fellowship with God; and

(*c*) Through co-operation with and service of others. That sense of God's presence and of brotherhood must ever be present in religious teaching.

(*d*) The end is not attained by each living a good life, nor even by that plus helpful service, but only by developing a new social organism. This, like all great ideals, is a flying goal. The Kingdom of God, as realised in human society, is not a fixed state, but rather a becoming.

1. Not in the sense of a *form* of government, but of the promotion of the common good, as in the phrase the commonwealth of learning, the commonwealth of nations—the commonweal.

(*e*) The good life is an achievement of the person, and the better society or Kingdom of God is an achievement of the persons comprising it. It does not come ready made. The teacher cannot create character, nor can he make it grow.

(*f*) The ideal of all life and society is Jesus of Nazareth.

The word "Education" seems to some, strangely enough, to exclude God. The procedure, therefore, should be defined. It may be stated roughly as follows:—

Religious education is an attempt reverently to understand God's laws in the development of human life, and intelligently to co-operate with Him in carrying out His purposes.

(1) Any attempt to do God's will which is conceived and purposed through love to God and His children is done reverently.

(2) God in human development, as elsewhere, works sanely, intelligibly, that is, according to laws which can be understood.

(3) God expects His children, endowed with intelligence, to study His ways of working in order that they may co-operate with Him, not merely by their desires, but "with the understanding also." This is what the scientific farmer, biologist, psychologist, doctor who is religious has done with such conspicuous success. There is no reason to suppose that in religion, and there only, God places a premium on lack of intelligence. By intelligent study it seems possible to get away from the wasteful trial and error method, and to approach to something like intelligent

methods, carefully worked out and objectively tested as in other human endeavours.

Once agriculture was carried on by trial and error. In recent times it was discovered that its laws could be understood. Intelligently co-operating with them what formerly was beyond imagining has become a commonplace. Disease, once believed to be the scourge of the gods, is mastered when understood. Instead of accepting plagues, the drinking water, food supply, and sanitation are looked after. So it has been in the study of mind, of education, of astronomy, of biology, etc. By this understanding of underlying principles, and by intelligent co-operation with them, greater results than before dreamed of have been secured.

But in religious education too much place is yet given to the costly trial and error method. Youth is the golden opportunity. It is as if God said, " I set aside one-third of life's span for education. Take these whom I trust to your care. Bring them up in my love." What is needed now is a self-forgetting devotion to the study of God's laws as He reveals Himself in the development of human life such as has characterised seekers after truth in other fields of science; a conscientious fitting of themselves on the part of leaders and teachers as is demanded in other professions; and a consecration to God and the service of humanity that is worthy of the followers of the Master of life.

CHAPTER II.

The Idea of God.

THE theory and practice of religious education is directly dependent on the idea of God. The conception of God inevitably colours and modifies all purposeful thinking about human life and religion. Every detail of religious education is influenced ultimately, either consciously or unconsciously, by one's vital and dominant idea of God and His purpose, just as one's whole outlook on and philosophy of life are similarly influenced.[1]

No one has seen God at any time. No one is able, in this life, to comprehend Him fully. But this does not mean we cannot know Him really and intimately. All through the ages the great quest of the human heart has been to know God. In this search three of the theories which have been worked out with some clearness may be mentioned.

1. The reader is referred to "The Meaning of God in Human Experience," by W. E. Hocking. (Yale University Press, 1912.)

One of these is *Pantheism*. In its extreme form it holds not only that God is in everything, but that everything is therefore worthy of divine worship. Pantheism therefore easily becomes polytheism in its worship. Since God is in everything in the sense that it is divine or in keeping with the divine mind, then whatever is, is right and inevitable. It naturally tends to fatalism, and paralyzes effort. In its most refined form it approaches the third theory discussed. It is quite clear that this idea of God would necessarily lead to a very distinct and clear type of educational effort, influencing content and method and organisation to the last detail.

The antithesis of Pantheism is *Dualism* or *Deism*. Here God is conceived of as transcendent, not immanent. He created the world by divine fiat. Having set it going He stands apart, interfering only in serious crises. These interferences are out of the ordinary, and may be not only different from, but contrary to the natural course of events or laws of nature. He is not *in* the world, so any interference is in the character of a miracle. Indeed, the world may be entirely evil and man without guidance of any divine light. The Autocrat is apt to be pictured upon His throne in rather complete isolation from humanity, on whom He looks down with feelings of compassion or anger. This idea of God is clearly seen in many passages of the Old Testament and in Mohammedanism. Such a God may well be jealous and spitefully angry, requiring to be propitiated with gifts, necessitating

intermediaries to secure admission to His presence, and for His own glory consigning individuals and nations to eternal death.

Through the history of Christianity the truth in both immanence and transcendence has been fairly clearly felt, and most of the great historic creeds have attempted to conserve both ideas.

The third theory is known as *Theism*. Here creation is not an act but a process towards the development of ever higher and better persons. The world exists only through God's sustaining presence. He works in the hearts of men, not as a material force like electricity, nor by the authority which compels against the will, but by the inspiration to better and nobler things. Nothing in the world, no human experience can be indifferent to Him. In every true success He triumphs, in every real failure He suffers. If man responds to His guidance, progress is made. He is not exhausted in His world, nor in the consciousness of men. He is everywhere the inner moving inspiration in every good impulse, thought, and act, and the sense of incompleteness, of a higher end, of the ideal which is most surely felt by the best people is of itself sufficient to teach that God is not realised and comprised in the highest human consciousness. The immanent God is not the impersonal wisdom of the Hebrews, nor the impersonal logos or reason of the Greeks, nor the impersonal spirit of the pantheists, nor the impersonal absolute of the rationalists; He is conceived of as a personal God, whose mind and heart are in some sense similar to our own. The term "per-

sonal" is used of God not in a limiting but in an expanding sense. It is the highest concept known and implies *at least* the qualities we associate with personality at its best.

Jesus' supreme work was to show us what God is like. The revelation of His character and His purposes and attitude to man *is* the Good News. The constant cry of the human heart has been "Shew us the Father." Jesus pulls aside the veil; sweeps away misconceptions. His authoritative answer is "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." All the complicated systems of theology worked out to show why Jesus came, in as far as they have departed from the perfectly simple and satisfactory statement of his own, have been in error, and have greatly hindered the spread of Christianity.

It has been asserted that Jesus added nothing to the Jewish idea of God. Montefiore argues thus, and McGiffert, in *The God of the Early Christians*,[1] seems to support that view. It is true the term Father was in common use and that Jesus accepted much of the content of the word Yawe; but he gave the whole concept new content and new emphasis. His mission may be said to be comprised in this. The universe can never be the same since Jesus' revelation of God.

That revelation is not yet completely comprehended. But certain phases of it are so clear that there can be no mistaking them. In the first

1. Scribner. (New York, 1924.)

place God is Father. Into that term, which Jesus constantly used and taught his pupils to use, must be packed all the highest conceivable qualities of mind and heart which can be imagined, not as the best earthly father alone, but as mother as well. He sums up in Himself all the best and highest possible ideals of *parenthood*. There is no possibility of adding, as is attempted in the concept *Mother* of God. And while the term Father expresses the highest human conception of intimate fellowship and love and the finest and holiest human purposes and hopes for children, it is believed to be but a mere suggestion of the depth and beauty of its perfect fulfilment in the loving Father.

And Jesus showed that this highest human relationship of Father and children included in the family circle the whole world—all humanity. He has no " pets." All are His. As the father and mother yearn over every child, whether the child returns the love or not, so it is with God, only the love is intensified immeasurably going beyond human comprehension. Jesus ever exemplified it. All good people believe one should forgive another. The utmost limit of human forbearance suggested by the Jewish religious leaders was to forgive seven times, and few of them (or of us) ever reached that ideal. Jesus said " not seven times but seventy times seven." In other words there *is* no limit. He led His disciples directly up to the boundless love of the Father. And He taught it (so that even the dullest could not mistake it), by His attitude to

the disciples and to His enemies, and on the Cross.

Jesus always sought to get people to enter into the joy of the personal relationship with the Father. This may be considered His chief aim. The message always was "Come." The poor and lowly, the rich and powerful, the sick and well, the godly and the ungodly, little children and learned doctors—all were urged to come fearlessly and gladly to the loving Father. Even the wilful prodigal is a loved son, whose going away in open rebellion left an aching void in the Father's heart. Day after day His eyes were set upon that empty road by which he left, and when the son appeared, though in rags and shame, while he was yet a great way off, his Father ran and welcomed him with a great, unfathomable love. This is God, the loving Father, as Jesus pictured Him, both in His teaching in His every-day life, and in His death on the cross.

In the light of this it must be admitted that much of the teaching about God in the various branches of the Church which calls itself Christian is not the teaching of Jesus. It is based on systems of Theology largely mediæval in their background or pagan or Jewish. And this idea of God, very different from what Jesus revealed, is reflected and directly taught in lessons, hymns, and prayers used in religious education. To make this clear let us examine a few of the common forms of so-called Christian teaching.

God is often pictured as a Mighty Tyrant

or Arbitrary Autocrat, sitting upon His throne somewhere afar off, above the clouds, in grand and awful solitude, fierce in His anger against all who dare displease Him, or who make a mistake, however well intentioned they may have been—like Uzza, who went to steady the ark.[1] This being so, it is necessary to use every means to secure, if it be possible, His favour, and so escape awful death. He can only be approached through special intermediaries, ceremonies, sacraments and gifts. So a long, closely graduated series of intermediaries is provided—the Virgin (whose mother heart is tender, and who will intercede with the passionate, choleric God) angels, patron saints, pope, cardinals, bishops, priests, etc. There are also graduated ceremonies—masses, prayers, confessions, indulgences, penances—(often at graduated prices publicly posted) through which the wretched individual may be permitted to enter into the presence of the loving Father!

Others have pictured God as an Austere Judge, bound by the literal interpretation of impersonal law, the slave of something called Divine Justice, and quite immune from any feeling of human sympathy. Before Him every individual is an abject criminal, fit only for death, and death of the most horrible kind, everlasting torture. An Advocate may plead the case of humanity, but even if the pleadings are well founded Divine Justice must be satisfied. Such satisfaction could

1. I. Chron. 13: 9 ff.

never be given until Jesus, the Son of God, offered Himself as a substitute for the sin of others. Then, and then only, when His blood was actually shed, was Divine Justice satisfied, and the dignity or anger of God satisfied. So there is the dilemma, never satisfactorily explained, that God loves all people, and His heart yearns for them, but He is powerless to love until His "Divine Justice" is satisfied. He loved so that He gave His Son, but He gave the Son in order to satisfy His own anger and make it possible for Him to love His own children. Even after the sins are paid for and full propitiation made, man is still under the wrath of God. The death on the cross, Jesus' supreme revelation of the love of God, and of His suffering with His children, is twisted and distorted into a bargain and the discharge of a legalistic bond.

Another theory pictured God as Creator who, for the glory of His Great Name created millions fore-ordained to death and eternal punishment, yet held them responsible for "going astray," and all for His own glory. Such is another idea of the loving Father. Indeed, all are supposed to be born in sin, weighted and handicapped before they are born, totally depraved so that it is only by a miracle that any one can be saved. Such is another elaborate theological system explaining the Father! Then how many parents use God as a means of punishment! To enforce their authority or vent their anger the threat is often heard: "If you do that God will——." Or, the child is given the idea that God, like a

malignant Detective, prys into his inmost thoughts in order to catch him in some wrong doing. Terror has been brought to many a child by the words, "Thou God seest me," which originally expressed tenderest care. Though alone in the desert and beyond human help, even a mother's, still God could see and was willing and able to help.

These dominant ideas of God have coloured the whole content of religious education. If sermons, lesson courses, hymns, prayers be examined it will be found that these ideas of God are reiterated and impressed with emotional content. Stripped of pious phrases and theological terms the teaching is that God is angry, but that through the gracious work of Jesus it is possible to get into His good graces. The idea of most people is that Jesus is much more approachable, gentle, kindly, loving, than God! Jesus becomes a go-between. So, in effect, they pray to Jesus that He may intercede with the stern and angry God. Yet Jesus' whole life and work was to help us to see that God is love. Deissmann says, "The statement that Jesus made the forgiveness of sins, which He preached, secretly dependent upon His own future death, is to be placed among the most poverty-stricken of theological foundlings. He announced the full amnesty of the Father without bargaining and haggling."[1]

One's whole attitude to life, one's whole

1. Deissmann, "The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul." (Doran, New York; Clay, England, 1923. p. 80).

religion, is coloured and shaped by one's idea of God. Love and fellowship with God is the heart of the religion of Jesus. Yet if God is presented as a harsh, cranky, arbitrary Being who creates and elects multitudes to an eternity of punishment, who blasts any who dare so much as touch the base of the mountain on which His glory is supposed to be, who sends plagues on all, including innocent children and animals, and kills a child in every home where there is a son, who drowns a world of people, who orders a father to murder his loved only son, who destroys whole armies and nations because they disobey what look like arbitrary laws—if persons thus conceive God, their whole attitude, to God, to others, to the world—then is their whole view of life warped, twisted and distorted. It cannot be sane and sweet and wholesome, and there must ever be a barrier between them and intimate loving fellowship with the Father.

Besides, the aim of all Christian teaching is to help each person enthusiastically to love God and to be absolutely loyal to His purposes. Such an attitude is impossible with a God whom one fears or distrusts. It is possible only when there is absolute confidence in, and close, personal intimacy with God. Such a condition is made possible in but one conception of God among all the religious of all time, namely, in the revelation of Him as given by Jesus.

This, then, is the first and basic principle of Christian education. *The God which we*

present, especially to little children, must be the loving Father as Jesus revealed Him.[1]

Though no one can compass that idea of God in a definition, this at least is ever true:— *Any idea or notion of God for which one feels like apologising or defending on the grounds of humanitarianism or the purest, deepest human love must be inadequate and misleading.*

Little children accept literally what is taught. Early conceptions of God influence the whole life. If these early conceptions are wrong the child is prejudiced against God, against religion, and so has a distorted view of life and the world.[2] The pupil is thus driven from God, and things religious by those who seek to teach him Christianity. This wrong conception is perhaps harboured secretly, and not spoken about to others. Around it other prejudices are organised until, almost unconsciously, there is a body of prejudice, or a complex, possibly a dissociated consciousness, which militates against every attempt to get into closer touch with God.

According to some theories[3] of human development a little child should be taught first the early, crude Old Testament ideas of God. This is based on as bad psychology as it would be unchristian. The birth inheritance of every child is the fellowship and love of the Father.

1. The significance of this for religious education has been worked out by a graduate student of mine, Professor Stanley Scott, Ph.D., in a thesis entitled, "The Bearing of Jesus' Idea of God on Religious Education."
2. *Cf.* Hugh Walpole's "Jeremy."
3. *E.g.*, the recapitulation theory.

The child heart of Christian, non-Christian and pagan is ready in response, to love Him with all the passion of their impulsive love when He is so presented to them.

Every one interested in religious education must see that every lesson, prayer, story, hymn, and other material or means used presents God as the Father whom Jesus revealed. As the pupils grow and are able to understand how in earlier times there was less perfect knowledge and cruder conceptions of God, these may be presented. But first secure for every one the joyful free entrance into fellowship with God. This principle cuts to the very heart of every single item and process of the work of religious education.

But is there not danger of losing the strong, just side of God's character, and having left only a weak, amiable, pleasant grandfatherly God? By no means. Nothing is more exacting than love. Love, in the New Testament is a great *dynamic*, a great impelling force. It sends men and women to the uttermost parts of the earth to suffer and die for the Gospel. This love God the Father feels for His children as is revealed in the life and death of Christ. Love is not sentimental softness. It is dynamic. Whoever loves God is a dynamo. Love impels, drives him to unexpected heights of service.

Every parent and every lover knows how exacting love is. No child, no parent, no young man or young woman could by arbitrary authority, however great, secure such service, command such

loyalty, force such consideration, or compel such heart-felt longing not to offend and such heart-felt desire to please. And while men and women and children can stand punishment inflicted by external authority even with rebellious pride, what agony there is in the consciousness that we have hurt or disappointed one who loves us! Love demands our best. It is the most exacting of masters. The purer, deeper, holier it is, the more exacting. The love of God holds us up to our highest ideals. No bitterness of heart is so great as that caused by the consciousness of having wounded Him or forfeited, by our own action, His confidence and our intimacy with Him. The God whom Jesus revealed is no easy going sentimentalist. The highest standard of achievement is set up. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind." "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Does religious education stress education to the exclusion of the Spirit? This seems to be a problem to some people. Education is conceived of as being limited to "purely human" agency —whatever that may mean. The whole question goes back again to the idea of God and His relation to the universe (including man). "In what relation does God, as so thought of, stand in the world of experience? . . . The one relation in which God does *not* stand is that of essential separation. To take all that our highest experiences have suggested to us of beauty, of goodness, of reality, of power, of glory, to gather these

together and throw them outside the world, and personify them and call them *God;* and, having done this, to limit the meaning of the words *universe* and *nature* to what is left behind when these quintessential qualities have gone—is a profound misinterpretation of our experiences, for which we have paid dear, and shall continue to pay dear as long as we allow it to dominate our minds. If I am to use prepositions for the expression of my thoughts on this matter, I will say that God is both *in* the world and *beyond* it, just as in an infinite arithmetical series, Infinity is in every finite number, yet transcends them all for ever and for ever. . . He who identifies the Universe with its own material framework has already expelled from the Universe all that is divine in it."

—Edmond Holmes, *The Hibbert Journal*, January, 1924.

The religious educator cannot think of human life apart from God. What is it? How is it possible? How is the Universe and Nature ever conceived as distinct from Him? That dualism[1] can no longer be held. The religious educator believes that it is not a universe to be used but a Living Universe[2] to be loved. To the Christian every bush is aflame with God.

In such a universe God is ever beckoning on. He is the "eternal Beyond." Man's "arch-enemy, as he well knows, is the desire for finality

1. See page 18.
2. L. P. Jacks, "The Living Universe."

—the desire to which dogmatism consistently ministers . . . For all of us there is one work to be done, the work of creation, the work of spiritual evolution. But however high we may climb there is always a Beyond. . . We shall enter the Light, but we shall never touch the Flame."[1]

This Beyond, this lure of achievement, is the glory of the Christian Heaven.

With such an idea of God as Jesus taught only one conception is possible as to the relation of the child to Him. It is His purpose and desire that every child should grow up in Him, should "grow up a Christian and never know himself as otherwise."[2] Educational Evangelism[3] aims at securing this priceless boon for every child in the whole world.

Christian education seeks to enlist everyone in the enterprise of helping God make the human world what He wants it to be.

1. Holmes, *Ibid.*
2. Horace Bushnell, "Christian Nurture."
3. A. J. Wm. Myers, "Educational Evangelism."

CHAPTER III.

The Conception of Man.

THE material with which the religious educator works is human life. But what is human life or human nature? What are the laws of its development? If these can be known, even in part, is it possible to work to that extent intelligently, and not be restricted to trial and error methods. Can human nature be changed? Is it all bad, or all good, or partly each? These, and many other questions, arise whenever we consider the possibilities and principles of religious education.

Whatever else original nature may be, the original nature which the educator knows is the new-born child. Its characteristics and the laws of its development can be discovered only by a study of children. That has been done by many psychologists, and the reader is referred to the standard works on the subject. Here the purpose is merely to point out some of the more significant findings, and to interpret some of their bearings upon religious education.

The most obvious group of characteristics

of original nature are the organic functions over which the person has comparatively little direct control, such as the beating of the heart, breathing, the secretions of glands, etc. In respect of these functions all the educator can do is to see that they act normally. The importance of good health in character development is coming to be more clearly apprehended. The body, the psycho-physical organism, is the instrument through which life expresses itself. The better the health of the organism the better, and with less loss and friction, can the life express itself. And life expressed is what we know as character.

It is easy to see the direct effect of the physical condition on disposition. The healthy baby is normally contented and happy. But if in pain or distress he is fretful and bad tempered. What is so obvious in regard to physical health is equally true of the nervous system. A child well rested or healthily tired is a joy. But, if his nervous system is torn and frayed, he makes his own life and the lives of others miserable.

Within the last few years the importance of little understood glands has come to be recognised. The effect of the thyroid, pineal, adrenal and other glands on the physical, mental and moral life seems to be enormous. At present little that is of much practical value to the educator is known about them, except these two things: that what promotes good health promotes their normal functioning, and that whenever any one of them is deranged the most expert advice should be sought.

Every one recognises that a child who is frightened, agitated, nervous, is not responsible for its behaviour. But how little care is taken to build up strong, healthy, nerves. Parents think nothing of dragging a young child through stores on bargain days until he is wearied, hot, frightened, and poisoned with bad air. A little one is often seen tied into his carriage on the street. Suddenly waking in such strange surroundings, or otherwise frightened, he starts up with a terrified cry. No one comes, except perhaps passing strangers, and he feels himself a helpless prisoner, threatened with all manner of unknown dangers. Similar situations occur in the home. Is it not evident that one such experience may unstring the nerves and spoil the disposition and fine balance for life. Very often stories are told that people the world, especially the night time, with goblins and other enemies; and to this is sometimes added the idea of an angry God, and a future of torment. These things tend to unstring the finely balanced, delicate nerve system, on which the disposition, conduct and character depend.

Another group of characteristics found in original nature are the reflexes, such as winking, the knee jerk, and sudden withdrawals from undesired contacts, like a hot iron. These are important as self-preserving instincts, but offer little opportunity to the educator. They may be more fully controlled than the organic functions. Wise self-control is one of the marks of a strong character.

For education the unlearned tendencies present the chief field of endeavour.[1] Painstaking investigators have made inventories of these. One of the most noteworthy contributions in this connection was made by James.[2]

Thorndike's work,[3] built upon James's, is most complete, and the best that has yet appeared. McDougall[4] attempted to pair each instinctive response with an accompanying emotion, and to relate them to social development. Coe, whose analysis is always so penetrating and masterly, has discussed original nature in its relation to religious education.[5] Hocking[6] has made valuable suggestions, and Norsworthy and Whitley[7] have interpreted the best results of

1. There are those who claim that behaviour is the result of cell or bio-chemical activity. To them consciousness—the highest and noblest thoughts and purposes—are produced by material processes. All the beauty of child life becomes little more than cell reproduction. Heartbreaking human sorrow is almost identical with the secretion of salt water by the glands of the eyes. The heights and depths of human love are the by-product of physical activity, particularly of the sex glands. It seems preferable and more logical, to say the least, to explain the lower by the higher, and not vice versa.

2. Principles of Psychology, 2 vols. (Holt, New York, 1896.)

3. "Educational Psychology," 3 vols. Vol. I., "The Original Nature of Man." (Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, 1913.)

4. "Social Psychology." (John W. Luce, Boston. Third Edition, 1910.)

5. "A Social Theory of Religious Education." (Scribner, New York, 1917. 361 ps.).

6. "Human Nature and its Remaking." (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1918. 434 ps.).

7. "The Psychology of Childhood." (Macmillan, New York, 1921.)

psychology for the beginner in education. There is general agreement on these three points:—

(1) No characteristics, or tendency of the person, is in itself good or bad.[1] For example, take pugnacity. The person without this quality would be spineless. He would be of no value to a good cause. But over-developed pugnacity makes one a nuisance or a menace. The sex impulse is a normal function. Without it the person would be inhuman, a defective. Properly used it is holy; ill-used it degrades and debases. Vocalization indicates a great human capacity. But speech may be vile, or it may be to the glory of God. So it is with every thing in original nature. It may be a power for good or for evil. It is no more evil in itself than is radium or arsenic. The terms "good" and "evil" simply do not apply. They are in their usual significance used of persons only. One may use any part of his native endowment in such a way as to sanctify or pollute himself and society, but no single element is *in itself* evil or good.

(2) The original endowment, or the native capacity of every normal person, is almost infinitely rich and varied. The possibilities of the human life are beyond description. The intelligence of man has penetrated many secrets, and built up marvellous riches of knowledge. The

1. This is, of course, directly opposed to the doctrine of total depravity. That theory was arrived at abstractly, and not by a first-hand study of children. For a discussion of this point in its relation to education see Edmond Holmes, "What is and What Might be in Education."

beauty and extent of its creations, art, music, literature, science, institutions, religious efforts, is beyond computation. Who can fathom the limits of friendship, self-sacrifice, love, in the ordinary human heart? If one could half appraise the possibilities of any human life he would bow his head and worship. What has been accomplished is but the earnest of human possibilities. It is not too much to expect that, when the laws of human development are better understood as the race progresses, what is possible to the few will be accomplished by children, while the genius will reach heights as yet undreamed of. This is why the art of pedagogy, of teaching, of stimulating and guiding human development is the supreme art.

(3) Original nature is immensely modifiable. The almost proverbial "You cannot change human nature" is, like many popular sayings, the direct opposite of the truth. The influence of experience on every person disproves it. The more extreme cases reveal it more clearly. A child brought up under one kind of environment and training may become an outcast, a social rebel; under different circumstances he may become an economic, moral, and spiritual tower of strength. One may be an economic slave, bound down to hard labour on farm or in factory, without opportunity for education: a change in circumstances and he becomes a leader in some learned profession. Peter, James, and John, the sons of thunder, Gough, Hadley, Helen Keller —indeed all of us—are examples of the immense

modifiability of original nature. This is greatest in childhood.

Modifiability is not only possible but is an inherent tendency of original nature. It makes progress possible. The child is everlastingly experimenting and exploring. One day he discovers a use for legs and arms; another day something new. One day he manipulates things in one way; then next day he invents something else. This multiple response to a given situation —so different from the ordinary cast-iron response or instinct of birds and animals—is a distinct characteristic of human nature. It makes education necessary, because, unlike many other orders, native responses do not meet life's situations. It makes education possible. To the extent to which instinctive responses are limited, unmodifiable, to that extent education is impossible.

But the most outstanding characteristic of original nature may be called *the tendency or urge to self-completion*. This has never been clearly stated. The psycho-analyst approaches it in his theory of the libido. It is more clearly seen in the *élan vital* of Bergson. The closest approach to it is made by Hocking, in the term "Will to live," or "Will to Power."[1] But these phrases have unpleasant and misleading implications.

The tendency to self-completion manifests itself physically in growth. The tireless energy

1. "Human Nature and its Remaking," p. 65, etc. (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1913.)

of plants, animals, human beings, to develop to their limits is most striking. Even when mangled, starved, distorted, this urge persists. In the conscious life this tendency manifests itself in at least three ways, which may be distinguished for purposes of study.

(*a*) Every unlearned tendency is an indication of an inherent capacity, and the child is persistent in his endeavour to realise capacity. Take but two examples. There is the tendency to movement. The child, by this inner urge, spends incalculable energy in more or less random movements. He is never still. As if some mighty force were upon him, he makes continuous effort, until through the stages of movement, creeping, etc., he is able to walk, to run, and so on through play to athletics and work.

Every normal child has an inborn tendency to vocalisation. From the earliest moment he experiments with this strange power—crying, cooing, babbling, humming. Vocalisation indicates a latent capacity of speech, and, as if under the exercise and compulsion of some mighty power, he strives with tireless persistence, until he masters to a greater or less degree the power of speech and of song.

Where inborn tendency is utilised, education is effective; when the tendency is lacking education in that respect is impossible. The recognition of this basic law will shift the whole point of emphasis in teaching. But the tendency to the completion of the self along the line of every inherent capacity is characteristic of mankind.

(*b*) This tendency manifests itself, again, in the desire to cause, to produce, to achieve. The very young child discovers this ability, and nothing pleases him quite so much. He discovers he can make certain sounds that others make, and that these produce results—a smile from others or he is taken up, given food, etc. The child who drops his rattle and has it restored, and at once drops or throws it, is not necessarily displaying bad temper, but is merely showing his power, and his satisfaction in producing results, in achieving. It is a first step towards self-completion which comes only through achievement of worthy purpose. It is seen still more clearly in the desire *to be* something (such as a policeman, a conductor, a general), which is so characteristic of childhood and youth. It is necessary to take advantage of this principle in any sane programme of education. This striving towards self-completion, towards an ideal, so characteristic of human nature, is in a sense the heart of Christianity. Jesus embodies the highest ideal of the completed self that man has ever conceived.

(*c*) In the third place this inherent tendency reveals itself in the feeling after unity of life. In James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, he reports that in almost every case studied the sense of dis-unity within oneself brought dissatisfaction. Only when a sense of inner harmony was acquired did the person have peace.

Now one may attain wonderful success in the development of specific capacities, and in the achievement of many successes, but these do not

necessarily satisfy. There is that inner urge, as of some mysterious power, which impels each one to seek a unity without which the self is incomplete.

Of course, it is not implied that the young child, or even the adult, recognises and names these tendencies. But if these are characteristic —as seems self-evident, else the whole development of man lacks an essential motive power— then their significance for education and religion is most vital.

(*d*) If this central tendency of life to self-completion is a fact it throws light on other aspects of consciousness. For example, a great deal of attention has been given, and rightly, to the emotions. Educators long ago pointed out the serious danger of stirring emotions without providing for their normal and adequate expression. Shand[1] showed that habits of feeling, or sentiments, are built up, and organise life around themselves. Woodworth, in his *Dynamic Psychology*,[2] drew attention to the inner urges or drives.

But it was Freud[3] who compelled attention in a striking manner. He traced many ills to the suppressed libido which, through the sub-conscious or otherwise, finds the means of expressing

1. "Foundations of Character." (Macmillan, London, 1914.)
2. Columbia University (New York, 1918).
3. "A General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis." (Borri and Siveright, New York, 1920). And "Psychopathology of Everyday Life." (Unwin, London, Seventh Impression.)

itself and organises itself to the extent of becoming a complex, or even a dissociated consciousness. Freud traced almost everything to one inner force—the sex impulse. His work illustrates the danger of an interest or emotion organising everything around itself! Jung[1] could not agree with this theory, since he found at least two other sources of emotion or inner drives—the ego and the alter.

While recognising the contribution of these and many other theories, is it not much truer to the facts to refuse to think of emotion as a thing in itself? Every state of consciousness has its feeling tone, its affective or emotional content. Whatever other function the emotion may have, one is registering the value an experience has for the person. For example, a bear is seen in the woods by one who is unarmed. There is an overwhelming emotion to run, to seek cover, to "freeze," or to fight. The same person, unarmed, sees a similar bear in a Zoo with no such emotion. The difference in the emotional content of experiences seems to depend on the bearing each is conceived to have upon one's life or what is dearer than life. The things which relate directly to one's own life, the young, honour, the interests of friends and loved ones, the group or race, sacred things and persons, tap great reservoirs of feeling. This is what is meant by saying a thing is vital to one.

1. "Theory of Psycho-Analysis." (Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Co., New York, 1915.)

Now while every state of consciousness has its emotional content, it must not be forgotten that it has also its intellectual and its volitional content. The emotional content registers the felt value of the experience, and sets free the driving power. An ideal, a memory, the activity of the constructive imagination, the working out of an intellectual problem, the achieving a purpose, any of these may have an emotional content which quite blots out the passage of time, and such insistent demands as that of hunger and fatigue.

This is a very important point for religious education. The great drives and emotional forces are inherent in life. Education can stimulate and define ideals, direct the purposes, and so link all up with life that these are caught up in the elemental urges. Something of this is implied in Kidd's "Emotion of the ideal."[1] But where there is no solid intellectual basis and no adequate expression in purposeful activity, emotionalism and sentimentality result. These are not uncommon in certain types of piety, of revivals, and of personal evangelism. They are altogether unwholesome.

(*e*) A study of original nature demonstrates the unity of life. No part can be singled out as separate from the rest. The physical is an essential part of human life. Every state of consciousness has its intellectual, its feeling, and its volitional content. In every expression of life it is

1. Benjamin Kidd, "The Science of Power." (Putnam, New York, 1918.)

the unity, the self, the person, which expresses itself, and it cannot prove an alibi. Whatever affects any part affects the whole; what affects the whole affects every part.

For education this has one obvious and major deduction; education must be for the whole; for the person. It must release the whole personality. In so far as it falls short it is imperfect education.

Religious education reads the same law written by the hand of God in every human life. There is no single strand which may be labelled "religious." The unity, the self, the person is, or is not, religious. So far as we know, no other creature on earth can be. Nothing that is human is alien to religious education. The idea once held that some strand or essence of life was religious and could be "saved" regardless of the rest was embodied in the word "soul." There has been, at times, great fervour in saving souls, while human beings were neglected and let die. In that sense the concept must disappear. But the word soul may be redeemed by being given its proper content, which is the whole unity, the self, the person, including—what is so often omitted—the spiritual nature and its relation to God. In this sense the word soul—the whole person, including his relationship to God—is a fruitful, meaningful term which should again come into its own.

The utmost intelligence, training and consecration is demanded for such work as this. One

has but to apprehend the sacredness and power of a single life to realise this. How many lives have been ruined by ignorant and crude handling, even on the part of the best intentioned religious people. Literature abounds in striking examples. Patterson Du Bois gives several in his little book, *Fireside Child Study*.[1] One of these is here quoted:

THE TOYS.[2]

My little son, who looked from thoughtful eyes,
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobeyed,
I struck him, and dismissed
With hard words, and unkissed—
His mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
And found him slumbering deep,
With darkened eyelids, and lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-veined stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.

1. Dodd, Mead, New York, 1903.
2. *Ibid.*, ps. 31-33.

This poem of Coventry Patmore's is one of the most pathetic appeals for childhood in English literature. The conclusion, the moral is one of the most noteworthy instances of adult self-sufficiency—diverting a child's capital to investment for adulthood instead of childhood. "Here are the concluding lines of the poem—the perverted moral":—

So, when that night I prayed
To God, I wept and said:
Ah! when at last we lie with trancéd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good—
Then, fatherly, not less
Than I whom Thou has moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

Patterson Du Bois concludes: "The parallel is effective and legitimate enough, no doubt. But suppose, instead of spending himself in sorrow for his child's childishness in the hope that God will do the same for him, he would set about to inquire why his unkissed child finds more peace and comfort in his simple 'toys' than he does in his own father!"

—From *Fireside Child Study* (Patterson Du Bois. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1903.

In dealing with human life, so full of possibilities, there is great risk, as there is in handling

anything of exceedingly high power. Mis-direction may mean great destruction and devastation. It is the risk everyone takes who drives a high-powered motor car, a locomotive, an ocean liner, a battleship, a great machine or engine, or handles a high voltage electric current, explosives or big guns. None of these compare in their power of destruction, or of upbuilding, with a single human life. Religious education demands the most exacting study, consecration and skill, if human lives, with their unlimited power for good or ill are to be stimulated and directed so as to be conserved. And conservation means nothing less than each living his own life to its highest and best in fellowship with God, and in human brotherhood.

CHAPTER IV.

The Attitude to Society.

EDUCATION and religion are now thoroughly committed to the social point of view. But practice has not in this (as in other respects) always kept pace with theory. The prophets preached social righteousness. Amos, Hosea, Micah, the Deuteronomist, the Isaiahs, Jesus and their successors have placed the emphasis upon social relationships. Their religion was distinctly ethical. But the change in emphasis from the more individual to the more social in modern times is very recent. From this point of view it is enlightening to go through the official reports of Churches, teachers' conventions, Sunday School lessons, and Church and school periodicals. Space will permit of but a single example. In 1880 the Methodist Episcopal Church[1] left no doubt as to where it stood.

1. "Journal of the General Conference," 1880, p. 461.

Personal doctrinal belief was the essential thing. "To neglect doctrinal teaching encourages a latitudinarianism which weakens the future power of the Church." In the Address of the Bishops, at late as 1888, there is a brief reference to the labour question, in which the flat-footed statement is made that the financial and political side of the question had nothing to do with the Church. In spiritual matters only was it concerned. Similar pronouncements were made by other Churches about the same time.

It is a far cry from such statements as these to the whole-souled social platforms adopted by this and other denominations within the last few years. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America[1] in 1912, 1916 and 1919 formally adopted and promoted far-reaching social programmes.

Peloubet's Select Notes, a commentary on the International Lessons,[2] explicitly states that the aim is to know the Bible and to promote personal holiness. The kingdom of heaven pertains to the hereafter. Christians are the salt of the earth, preserving it from corruption,[3] not reconstructing society. Social helpfulness is encouraged, but rather as a means to personal holiness, a help to oneself. Indeed, this is the dominant social note as late as 1920. An analysis of the Bible passages used shows a great preponderance of the

1. See the annual reports of even date.
2. Wilde, Boston.
3. Lesson for July 27th, 1890.

miraculous and personal,[1] and an astonishing omission of the social teachings of the prophets.[2]

Considering now the basis of a social theory we may select the following points:—

1. The individual, thought of as apart from all others, is an abstraction. The child is born into a social situation. His very life is possible only through the ministrations of the mother, nurse, etc. From his earliest moment he is in contact with others. Not only his physical but his whole life is dependent on the stimulus and guidance of other persons.

Society, on the other hand, is made up of persons organised. These units are the materials out of which the structure is built. The nature of the building depends on the quality of the material; but the use of each unit depends on the design, on the relation of each to all the others. That is the difference between a heap of stones and, say, the Pantheon or Westminster Abbey.

Some writers have gone so far towards the social point of view as almost to have lost sight of the individual. Sometimes the question is asked, Which is the more important, the individual or society? The question reveals a fundamental misconception. They are not separable. They are the foci of an ellipse; the centre and

1. A. J. Wm. Myers, "The Old Testament in the Sunday School," Chapter IV. (Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1912.)
2. The Church School, January, 1922, ps. 445-449.

circumference of a circle. One is impossible without the other. The two together are the unit. The individual is impossible without the social group; the social group is made up of persons.

2. The tendency to look out for self has always been recognised. Many have claimed that the altruistic tendency does not manifest itself until adolescence. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Sympathy, love, readiness to share possessions, and the desire to care for others —the parental tendency—are present from the earliest time. Not only gregariousness but altruism are present as early, and are as fundamental in human life, as are the self-preserving tendencies.

3. One of the earliest unlearned tendencies to reveal itself is gregariousness, the desire to be with others of one's own kind. The tiny child is usually unhappy if left alone too long. One of its chief delights is the presence of others. If it were not for this, society could not have developed. Being with others there soon and inevitably arises relationships such as leader and followers and simple conventions or rules. In chapter three it was pointed out that all education can do is develop the latent possibilities. Here in this urge to social groupings and relationships, without which the person feels himself incomplete, is the promise and potentiality of society to its most complex organisation. Some may think it, at the present time, perfect; others perverted. But here at any rate is one of the mighty inner drives which may be directed to-

wards the underworld, or toward the Kingdom of God.

4. The aim of education, as now generally stated, includes social efficiency. This idea is found in such leading educators as Coe, Jacks, Sadler, Dewey, etc. Education is regarded as a function of society, carried on by society, and for social ends. It is the means through which society consciously directs its own development. Thomas Davidson, in his *History of Education*, called it "conscious evolution." The school must seek to help the pupil fill his place as a member of society. This is not dealing in futures. The pupil has a place, the child has his own functions in society.[1] The school must help them live just now. This is distinctly the purpose of religious education. Its aim is not to help persons live well when they are twenty-one; or when they are old; or merely to fit them for heaven. Its work is to help each one to live to-day his own highest and best life. This means that it must help them live in the Spirit of Jesus, and that includes at least fellowship with God and fellowship with and service of others. But does not religious education help people live well in the future? Most certainly; but it is by helping each one live his best life to-day. The best preparation for the future is to live well to-day. There is no other way.

5. The religious person recognises in this inherent social tendency of mankind one of the laws of God. It is significant that while the

1. Coe, "The Functions of Children in the Community," *Religious Education,* February, 1918, ps. 25-32.

progress from earliest primitive times to the present has been so great as to be beyond computation the tendency to form and to reform society was never greater than it is to-day. Not only is this so, but it is also true that where society has reached its highest levels, as in the best homes and Churches, there is found the greatest keenness for still more rapid progress. In the best society is found the clearest appreciation of the need of and the strongest urge towards, the reconstruction of society. In other words, in society itself is found the principle of growth, of reaching out to fulfilment. Man is driven by an inherent tendency to reach out, to strive for completer self-fulfilment.

To say that in society itself is found the principle of growth is not ruling God out. It is ruling Him in. God is in human life. Its upward progress is one of the clearest revelations of God's presence as the directive force, as the inner guide of all life. He is revealing Himself as rapidly as mankind responds to its best impulses in achieving its highest social ideals.

6. But to-day the insistent demand is for religion to help reconstruct society. One hundred years ago each family was comparatively complete in itself. If the head of the family were a moral and religious person he could work out his principles as he wished. His conscience was his guide. But to-day the social system is so complex that each is inextricably linked up and enmeshed with others. The family is no longer self-dependent and complete in itself. Each is a part of the concern or larger whole, and must

conform to its standards. The old-time tradesman revealed his integrity and his personality in the materials he used and the work he produced. To-day as an employee running a machine he may have to use material and turn out work that his soul hates. Individual integrity and character is not alone responsible, and cannot bear the whole load. It is a matter for industrial, civic, social character. The *system* can bind or loose; can imprison or liberate the spirit of man.

What chance have the millions of crushed souls such as are pictured in Florence van Cleve's little poem? Christianity can never rest until society which makes such conditions possible is itself reconstructed in accordance with God's will.

In the Hospital.

The Doctor smiled, and said, "You may go home
to-morrow";
And he looked surprised when I
Returned no answering smile. How should he
know
The sudden shrinking of my tortured flesh
From all that "going home" implies to me?
I am so tired—so tired. And when I think
Of taking up the burdens that I dropped
When sickness brought for me a breathing space—
The grimy, odorous clothes, so hard to rub
To whiteness as I bend above the suds;
The food that must be bought, prepared and
cooked;
The constant struggle to keep up the rent,
So that our poor, cheap sticks of furniture
May not be set out in the public street,
(Ah, God! that fear looms chief of all my fears!)

Then is it strange that I should cling
To this white cot, this atmosphere of rest,
Where I may sleep, afar from vendors' cries,
And noisy brawlings from the flat next door?
I almost hoped this pain would end all pain;
But no; the verdict's "Life!" I must go home!

—*Florence van Cleve.*

The individual can attain his best only in a society that is itself idealistic. "Social idealism," Coe's phrase,[1] aims at the achieving of such a society.

This is the aim of the leaders in religious education and religion, and also of many of the leading sociologists. Where shall all who desire such end get their ideals, inspiration, and dynamic? Ellwood is right in finding them only in religion. He says, "Social science demands a religion *which will release the creative energies of men; which will not only inspire faith and hope in individual life, but enthuse communities for progress; which will not only strengthen and uplift individuals, but send them forth to build a new and better social world.*"[2]

7. Is the ideal society a fixed state for which religion fits people, and into which, when fitted, they are transferred? That is the view of many who speak about the Kingdom of God. Wherever people live together in fellowship with each other and with God as His children, there is the

1. "A Social Theory of Religious Education." (Scribner, New York, 1917.)
2. "The Reconstruction of Religion," pp. 161-162. (Macmillan, New York, 1922.)

Kingdom. Religious education attempts to direct life in the achieving of an ever more perfect life in an ever more perfect society. Thus the Kingdom is not a fixed state. It is ever becoming. As man advances he gets a fuller vision of heights not yet attained. The only end is "be ye perfect." Even the person who has the clearest vision does not comprehend what this may mean. But the joy of it is that every one may be a partner with God in helping man achieve the civilisation towards which the spirit of God within lures him on. At last it has drawn all peoples and nations and creeds together into one great league[1] to prevent war, disease, crime, unemployment, and to promote the common good.

8. But where are the principles to be found on which this conception, being now but vaguely apprehended and grasped after, is based? The revolutionary principles are found in the teaching of the Master. Being profound, dynamic, and stated by a great mind, they are expressed in the simplest language; being so stated they have not always been grasped and correctly appraised even by the wise and learned. They are these three:

(1) *The permanent value of the person.* To Jesus the person, any person, stands in a category all by himself. Money values have no meaning in comparison. One can no more express the value of a person in terms of money or material value than he can express the value of the beauty of a picture in terms of avoirdupois. With Jesus

1. The League of Nations and the World Court.

persons are ends and never means to an end. That one principle that persons are the end, not profits or power, is bound to revolutionise industry, politics, education and religion. Its expansive power is not yet clearly discerned.

(2) *The Kingdom of God.* Jesus demonstrated it in His own little group. He obliterated social, national and racial barriers. In a time and society where all these lines were drawn tightly, He pictured the Kingdom in terms of the simplest primary group—the family—the Father's home—which is understood by all peoples and all ages, and finds in every heart a glowing response. He presented it, not as a fixed state, but as an achievement. Great things He and His disciples were doing, but greater things were beckoning in the future.

(3) *The flying goal.* Who can rest under the intoxication of it? Who is great enough for it? The best in the present building on the best of the past for countless generations must strive up and ever upwards. It stirs the best in the individual and in society. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect"[1] is ever gaining new content. Even the evangelist could not forecast what it might be.[2] But all are called into the enterprise of helping God create the civilisation which is to be.

At the present religion is conceived too much as an extra, a decoration, a frill. Life in its fullness is lived six days a week and then an

1. Matt. v. 48.
2. I. John iii. 2.

artificial something is added. Much the same attitude is revealed in what is known as Christian service and Church work. "Business is business," but after hours one may indulge in humanitarianism. Money is made according to one set of principles, and then is generously given to help care for the wreckage caused by the application of these principles. Religion is too much identified with amelioration, with the fringes and leisure time of life. Christian service is too often conceived of as what is done after hours. Religious education aims to have religion co-ordinate with life. Then one's life-work—laying bricks, running big business, charring, pleading—will be seen to be the expression of one's religion, while leisure time will offer still further opportunity for special service. As Rev. T. Rhondda Williams said in effect in a recent address[1] Christianity has long enough been active on the byways. It is not enough for it to care for those robbed and left half dead under present social conditions. It must consciously modify social conditions and create a new society. The call is now for it to occupy the highways.

1. At the Commencement. Hartford Seminary Foundation. May, 1924.

CHAPTER V.

Some Principles of Religious Education.

In his Yale lectures, 1924, L. P. Jacks pointed out that the end of man is, according to Aristotle, an activity, life, the good life. Eudaemonia meant to Aristotle good-demoned, good-geniied, or as a Christian might say, good-spirited, or filled with the Spirit. The good demon or spirit gives insight. To Aristotle eudaemonism was never smooth-flowing pleasure. That could not be to him a life worthy of man. The worthy life was to him a life of achievement, of doing well whatever is worth doing; and supremely of living well a life that is worth while. And this expresses pretty well the conviction of leaders to-day in education and in religious education.

The religious educator believes that the child is born in the image of God[1] as suggested in the Old Testament, and as explicitly taught not only by words but by symbolic action, and by the

1. Gen. i. 27; Cp. i. 26, ix. 6.

whole life and attitude of Jesus. The magna charta of childhood is this passage: "And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God."[1]

What does "born in the image of God" mean? Certainly not physical resemblance. God is spirit.[2] Resemblance is in spirit. They who worship Him worship in spirit.[3] There are qualities in every human life that are like qualities in God. This is part of our heritage as human beings. Man has a specific human form. He has a mind, consciousness, that is distinct and different from every other creature. Any creature approaching these qualities in any respect can be described only by saying, "He is almost human." Now the supremely characteristic human quality is what is known broadly as the spiritual. No normal human being is without it. Any creatures with it would be human. The distinct bodily form, the characteristic intelligence, the spiritual nature are essential attributes of every normal human being. The supreme quality of the spiritual nature, common to all men everywhere, is the ability to have fellowship with God.

It has already been pointed out in Chapter II. that the elemental qualities of original nature

1. Mark x. 13-14; Matt. xviii. 1-6.
2. John iv. 24.
3. John iv. 23.

are not in themselves bad or good. Good psychology is one of the best cures for bad theology. But there is unlimited capacity to use the latent forces of original nature either for good or for evil. The latent power is enormous. What shall eventuate is for the most part a matter of education in its broad sense. What John Locke saw clearly so long ago is being confirmed and emphasised by all modern studies. He said: "Of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education. It is that which makes the great difference in mankind. The little or almost insensible impressions on our tender infancies have very important and lasting consequences; and there it is, as in the fountains of some rivers, where a gentle application of the hand turns the flexible waters into channels that may take them quite contrary courses; and by this little direction given them at first in the source they receive different tendencies, and arrive at last at very remote and distant places."

But granted that no instinctive tendency is in itself bad or good, is there not a *tendency* towards what is bad? Is it not easier to do what is bad than what is good? Fundamentally the answer goes back to the idea of God. Is He Father or not? Is He in every human heart or not? Is He working on, through human agency, to an ever better civilisation or not? Some deny the continuous upward trend of human society, but who of those who do so would willingly exchange the present for primitive society, with its

ignorance and superstitions, or for the wars, feuds, serfdom, and plagues of the middle ages? Indeed, the very fact that people persist in seeking after God, in spite of the example of the godless, the failures of the Church, and the farcical attempts that have been made to teach children religion, is a direct testimony to the inherent upward tendency in the human heart. The urge to self-completion is a modern way of expressing "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."[1]

Besides, what does *conscience* mean? No longer is it believed that within one is a mentor, unerring in its judgments, which tells one what is right and wrong. If such a thing existed it would take away moral worth from the individual. He would no longer be a free, moral agent. It has long been recognised that conscience can be educated. In one circumstance it is educated to drive one to kill his enemy; in another to forgive him. What conscience judges to be right or wrong is largely a matter of group influence.

Not a few have made the error of concluding that conscience is therefore merely the result and creation of the group. No power can add to original endowment. If conscience can be educated, that in itself implies an original endowment, a latent capacity. Besides it must never be forgotten that from apparently the most undesirable environment choice character has developed, and that it is possible for one to stand out, comparatively speaking, against the world. This original

1. John i. 9.

endowment of men makes it necessary to consider not only the *is* but the *ought to be*.[1] That capacity is no single instinct. It is the reaction of the whole person to his whole environment, including God and His purposes. It is true that "much of our moral life is explained, not by the action we did last but by the action we hope to do next."[2] In other words, it is the outreach of the self to that completion towards which every latent capacity impels it.

It is true that when one "looks out for number one," takes a rake off, feathers his own nest, evens up an old score, etc., people are apt to say, "Well, that's human nature!" Perhaps it is. But when a mother wears herself out, and gives her life for a child; when a man plunges into a burning building or into the sea to try to save someone whom he does not even know; when one gives everything he possesses and works night and day to pay off debts for which he is not morally responsible, and which he might avoid by process of law; when multitudes die for a Cause; when one lays down his life for a friend—this, too, is human nature!

But the idea that the tendency to evil is stronger than the tendency to good persists in the notion that it is easier to form bad habits than good. Psychology knows no such distinction. The laws of habit formation are the same

1. Compare McKenzie, "Modern Psychology and the Achievement of Christian Personality." (National S.S. Union, London, 1923.)
2. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

for each. These facts should be recognised. Original nature has practically infinite capacity for good or for evil. The laws of growth and development are impartial. The difference is in the human contacts. If these human contacts make the evil easier to learn than the good, it is a crushing self-criticism of the society we tolerate. It should be a challenge to every right thinking person to help make it what it might be.

Two theories of education are brought out in sharp contrast. According to one the "mind" is a blank sheet of paper, or a cavity to be filled, or plastic clay to be moulded. The other theory is that life is an activity; that life, character, must be achieved. The educator's work is to stimulate and direct; or to provide situations calling forth desirable responses. What is made of latent powers is the result, not of what is done to the person, but of his own reactions to his environment. Character is achieved. It is this latter view that the religious educator holds.

It is therefore clear that there is no place for the idea that if a child is left alone he will grow up good, any more than there is for the deduction that if left to fend for himself he will find his own food, will select what is wholesome, and grow up strong and well; or that without schools or other guidance he will educate himself. The capacities of life are like mighty engines—such as high-voltage electric currents, terrible engines of war, radium, T.N.T., a mountain torrent. They require to be handled by experts. One mistake

or mis-direction and havoc is wrought; properly used they promote human welfare.

The problem facing any life is stupendous. If this simple fact were once really grasped by parents, educators, and people in general, the cause of religious and moral education would be greatly promoted. For example, one must find the right use of his powers and capacities, and also maintain a very delicate balance between them. So he will attain to a harmonious development. A boy who is a little too rough is coarse; too gentle, effeminate. A girl who is too reserved is a prude; a little free is "too familiar." One who has too much emotion is considered "soft"; too little, lacking in "heart." Too much leisure and one is a vagabond or parasite; too much work, a grubber, a slave, a machine. So it is always—spendthrift, skinflint; social butterfly, bear; sensual, ascetic; worldling, recluse. How can one achieve a well-balanced, strong character? Each must find his own way, achieve his own destiny; and none has been this way before. Religious education seeks to help each person in this the greatest of all adventures, the adventure of life.

Besides one must find his way through the maze of social conventions. Many of these are artificial. Why should one observe an imaginary line dividing one property from another? Boys and girls cannot understand why, as often happens, they must act so differently when visitors are present, or why a few ornaments and bric-a-brac are more important in the house than a romping game of ball. If it were remembered

how artificial (and often unnecessary and foolish) some of the social conventions are, we would, perhaps, enter with more sympathy and seriousness into the great enterprise of helping children and youth find their way through them. The double problem, personal and social, constitutes life's greatest adventure.

Again, it is clear that growth and development take place according to clearly defined laws. This is so well established that norms have been worked out to a nicety. It is known just what height and weight children should be each month; when a child should walk and talk; when and in what order the teeth should appear. Mental development is so clearly defined that the mental age of a person is established by a series of tests. Similarly there is a normal development of the religious life. And it is believed that just as the biologists and doctors have discovered some of the laws of physical development and can promote health and prevent and cure disease, so the religious worker, by understanding the laws of human development, can make great progress in the development of moral and spiritual health, and in the prevention and cure of moral disease. Some of these principles are here stated briefly. Each would require a full chapter for anything like adequate treatment.

1. Life is a unity. One's religion is the total response of his whole life. Religion is not an instinct, nor does it deal with a shred or section of life. Man has a religious nature. Divested of this he is no longer human. Religious education

must, therefore, minister to the whole life. The Christian life is life at its fullest. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."[1] The abundant life is the life lived up to something of its fullness physically and mentally, rich in social contacts and rich in fellowship with God.

2. The religious life, and therefore its expression, differs with every new experience. According to God's law life differs from day to day. This is most clearly seen in childhood. Religious education must keep pace with the developing life. To promote premature experience and expression as, for example, to have a child of four sorrowing for and confessing her sin,[2] is much the same as forcing open a rose bud. To have one face life with only the religious teaching of childhood is to court disaster. The life, and therefore the religion of the child, is distinct from that of the youth or adult, and the child's religion is not fitted to stand the strain of later life. The instruction, the worship, the experience, the expression, must all keep pace with the developing person. A graded programme is necessary to meet the needs of persons graded by experience, and of different degrees of maturity.

3. Religious education must deal with the everyday vital experiences and interests of the pupils. One of the serious charges against the

1. John x. 10.
2. Pratt, "The Religious Consciousness." (Macmillan, New York, 1921.)

Church is that it has been formal and abstract in its teaching.[1] It has been considered right to preach about religion and politics in the time of Solomon but not in relation to the next election. Careful studies were made of the temple and the traditional tabernacle, but no study or sermon was based on the local Church plant. Birds and plants were considered suitable for study on Sunday, if mentioned in the Bible, but not the birds and plants within the actual experience of children. The tares formed a splendid subject, but who ever heard of studying weeds on farms and roadsides in relation to Christian living and the coming of the Kingdom of God. One could make something (by analogy preferably) of Jesus' words about children playing, but what about teaching them to play, and getting them better playgrounds than the city streets? Now the accepted principle is that the whole religious education must centre in, and be built up out of the actual everyday experiences and needs of the group.

4. The study of the Bible must not be identified with religious education. Such identification is one of the commonest fallacies in the public mind. As usually carried on, it may be good as the study of literature or of history. Both of these are good and necessary, but they are no more necessarily religious than the study of

1. Cp., "The Army and Religion." (Macmillan, London, 1919); and "Religion Among American Men," "The Committee on the War," and the "Religious Outlook." (Association Press, New York, 1920.)

any other literature or history. Memorised precepts do not necessarily, nor perhaps usually carry over into life. The fatality of believing that, because a pupil can rhyme off a Bible passage, he therefore lives out its teaching, or even understands it, should no longer need demonstration. The only sacredness about the means and materials used in religious education is their value in the promotion of Christian character. The only way to find out whether the teaching of the Bible, or any other material, is gaining the desired end is to study its effect on the pupils. The study of the Bible may be most effective; it may be neutral; it may be positively deleterious, and be so carried on as to antagonise the pupil to the Church, to the Bible, to all religious teaching, and to God. Whether what is carried on is religious education or not must be tested, not by the supposedly sacred character of the materials used, nor by the good intentions of the teacher, but by the effect on the lives of the pupils.[1]

5. The unifying principle in the programme of religious education is the experience of the pupil. The pupil, Jesus taught, is in the midst. Religious education seeks nothing less than the promotion of his own highest and best life in every one of its aspects. Here are some of the points to be considered in the analysis of the

1. For interesting studies of this problem see W. O. Rothney, "Character Education in the Elementary School." (Macmillan, Toronto, 1922); and Eaken Frank, "Is Bible Study Identical with Religious Education?" (Journal of Religion, September, 1923.)

local situation, for the purpose of building a programme:—

(1) What are the characteristics of each group or class of pupils in the community that are not being cared for by any other Church? How may the educational and religious work link up with these characteristics?

(2) What are the needs[1] of each group? No better study can be suggested for any Church that is seriously facing its opportunities. For example, take babies (children under four years of age) and list the needs—physical, medical, educational, etc. This raises such questions as those pertaining to fresh air, housing, wages; clothes, nourishment, medical care; training in habits of health, manners, control, etc.; play, playthings, playgrounds; aesthetic surroundings, art, music, etc.; religious atmosphere and training.

(3) The next step is to discover to what extent these needs are being met by existing agencies, as, for example, the home, the school, the board of health, etc., and also to what extent these agencies might be of more service.

(4) Then the Church should build its programme out of the purposes and experiences of the pupils,[2] so as to meet their needs and help

1. Among many books may be mentioned, M. V. O'Shea (Editor), "The Child: His Nature and His Needs." (The Children's Foundation, 1924.)

2. John Franklin Bobbit, "The Curriculum." (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1918.) Ellsworth Collings, "An Experiment with a Project Curriculum." (Macmillan, New York, 1923.) J. H. Badley Bedales, "A Pioneer School." (Methuen, London, 1923.)

them live their own lives day by day in the spirit of Jesus. In most places one of the big services of the Church will be to link up the pupil with existing agencies. It often happens that the municipality, or the government, or some private agency, is prepared to render the very service required, but the contact is not made because of prejudice or of lack of knowledge. But, where no agency meets a given need, then the Church must do so either directly or by stimulating others.

This does not mean that the work of the Church is to do the left-overs. The Church is the guardian or trustee of every child. Its business is to see that each one enters into his heritage—the kingdom of the fuller life. As guardian it trusts to any agency which meets a real need adequately; stimulates Christian leadership, and support of all worthy enterprises; and pioneers in discovering new leads and in establishing new agencies for meeting human needs. But the teaching of religion and the training of people in the Christian way is its own specific contribution, which it cannot surrender to any other organisation. The home and the Church stand supreme in this service.

A similar study of each age group will make clear to any earnest body of leaders something of the breadth and scope of a real programme of religious education.

6. Character is an achievement. It does not come by chance. In the final analysis one's own response or effort is what counts. It is so in all education. It is what one does—thinks, feels,

wills—that educates him. Religious education must provide a programme, not of words but of pupil activity. The educator's task is to present situations that call out responses. In other words the great thing in education is to stimulate motives and direct energy. It is therefore self-evident that the closer what is taught is linked up to the great drives of life, discussed in a previous chapter, the more successful will the work be. Unless these forces are properly directed and find proper expression life cannot be lived to the full in Christian service. The inner driving force will be lacking.

7. It has been said that life tends to organise itself around dominant emotions. It is less misleading to say that it organises itself around dominant, or vital, interests and purposes. These always have strong emotional and volitional content. Therefore religious education must not fail to do two things:—

(1) Stimulate many worthwhile interests. "Many-sidedness of interest" is Herbart's phrase, and, interpreted from the modern point of view, it is of first-class importance. An interest is an indication in what direction life is reaching out, impelled from within. It implies voluntary choice, the emotional content of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, etc., purpose and effort. And these are the great character-forming forces of life.

(2) Take advantage of youth. Through childhood and early and middle adolescence life is just bursting out in all directions. Interests

are myriad. Everything is new. Interests then are like the blossoms in springtime. There are far more than can be expected to bear fruit. Good education develops and directs the best. The life without vital interests is at the mercy of every passing whim. These are they who fill the streets and movie theatres. They must be constantly amused. They cannot possibly bear their own company for a single evening.

In order to develop interests it is necessary to take advantage of occasions as they arise. An incident, a passing event, may give the very opportunity required. Parents and teachers know how precious such moments are. The visit of a great musician, the sailing of a ship around the world, the chance visit of a scientist, the meeting of a Chinese boy—these "chance" events were moulding forces in the lives of four older boys and girls, and started interests which filled a large place in their lives. Worth while interests may develop into life purposes. Every life purpose is a chart and compass. It automatically shuts out multitudinous temptations, and unifies and strengthens. The purposeless life is weak and unhappy. One of the contributions of religious education is to help each pupil form worth while life purposes.

8. Not creeds but religious convictions are of character-forming value. Anyone may learn a creed by heart. Only one whose soul has been touched has a great conviction. Convictions grow out of knowledge, and first-hand experience. Then one speaks with authority, and not as the

scribes. If students work out their own convictions, which have grown out of first-hand study, and from personal contacts with human need, and find that what they are trying to express has been better said in some historic document or creed then the creed becomes the embodiment and the expression of their own conviction. Religious education will have failed unless it develops in the pupils great convictions, and helps them lose themselves in their passion for some great Cause. Whether the kind of religious education the local Church is carrying on is doing this or not, is one of the tests of its vitality.

9. One of the results of religious education should be an increased desire and an increased capacity for growth. This is true of all education. The teacher of English literature hopes that his pupils will long to read much more, and that they will be increasingly better able to enjoy it. Too much of the education and of the religious education provided now stultifies and kills growth. "Thank goodness I will never have to touch that stuff again" is too often the attitude of the student to his completed course. How serious it is if that should be the result of teaching religion!

This conception of growing desire and capacity is possible because we no longer think of reaching a limit, such as filling up a sheet of paper with writing, or a sack of potatoes, but as the developing of latent powers and possibilities. Among the deductions for religious education are the following:—

(1) Religious growth should never cease while

life lasts. Religion and life are coterminus. Every day new experiences should lead into fuller appreciation of God. Any theory which implies that it is a single act done once and for all is an absurdity.

(2) A growing soul necessarily implies a growing mind. Not the questioning of doctrines but the failure to think and enquire is sin. Here Protestantism comes into direct conflict with Roman Catholicism. To the latter "truth is static."[1] It teaches its votary that it is his "intellectual duty to resist the natural tendency of his reason and believe what he is told, just as he is expected to do what he is told." Here is a stone wall. The educator contends that all such walls must be torn down. One, who believes that God is in His universe, takes the strivings of intellect as the promptings of God to explore and seek where truth leads.

Now while Protestants stand firmly against this Roman Catholic position in theory, many adopt it in practice. Every time one tries to close an argument by appeal to an external authority he is doing much the same thing. Every attempt to shut off honest enquiry by dogmatic authority is setting limits; building a stone wall; hindering intellectual growth.

The open mind is one of the most precious results to be aimed at in religious education. The scientific attitude which seeks the facts and bases decision upon them—an attitude not always

1. Dean Inge, "The Catholic Church and the Anglo-Saxon Mind." (*The Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1923, ps. 440ff.)

found in scientists—is the mark of intellectual integrity. This scientific method should begin in earliest childhood, and ought to be practised wherever possible. For example, junior boys might ask, "Why should we give any of our money to others?" One answer is, "Because God says we should." Another answer is found by understanding the facts and, if possible, coming into personal touch with human needs. There is little doubt as to which method is formative.

10. What is religious experience? Is it some plus? This question has often been discussed, and requires longer treatment than is possible here. If it means that full, rich life is one thing and that religion is some extra added, it is not so. Every experience of life is religious to a person who has fellowship with God. The aim is to have the whole life full of God. This was true of Jesus. What experience of His was not religious?

It is really not a question of plus, but of minus. The life lived in its fullness is possible only when there is fellowship with God. The life that does not have that is minus. The natural, normal life is the life in God; any other life misses something, is deficient. Religious education seeks to conserve every life, and to help it find the abundant life.

CHAPTER VI.

The Content of Religious Education.*

RELIGIOUS education as a distinct "discipline" is comparatively new. It is not surprising that some think it has little content. This criticism it shares with all new arts and sciences. It may be of interest, therefore, to indicate something of its content. Indeed, one cannot do more than "indicate" in a brief chapter, where the field is so vast. But each line of investigation and study here mentioned suggests many others radiating in all directions.

While religious education as a separate discipline is new, it is sometimes forgotten that in practice it is as old as the race. Peoples from remotest antiquity have had a religion, and have taught it to their own groups at least, particularly to the succeeding generation. The aim of religious teaching has always been to help people live their best life as that best life was conceived by that particular tribe or people at that time. Its aim always is a kind of life, and the problem

* Reprinted from "The Journal of Religion" (University of Chicago), by courtesy of the Editors.

is to cultivate and develop this life. The ideas of religion may vary as widely as can possibly be imagined, and the methods employed may have no apparent relation to each other, but yet the central objective remains the same. For Christians, the aim is, of course, to help everyone achieve his best possible life, as that is revealed in Jesus.

Now it matters little where we begin. Touch religious education anywhere, and it throbs with life and pulses with vital interests because it touches, not the periphery, but the very centre of man's being—his God, his personal life, his group or society, and his children. It is a question whether any other single study has so many living contacts. By taking a few cases it may be possible to suggest something of the range of the materials, the complexity of the problems, and the urgency of the needs of religious education.

1. Religion has been studied in many ways. There have been historical and comparative studies; and studies of controversies, councils, creeds, etc. It is now seen that this whole enquiry must be approached from an entirely new point of view. For example, the idea of God may be worked out in a way that brings satisfaction to the eminent thinkers charged with expressing the faith. But the task of religious education, in this respect, is to interpret God, as Jesus revealed Him, in such a way as best to promote the highest life of the pupils, whether children, youths, or grown-ups. This is an entirely new approach. It raises a whole series of

issues not usually treated in any work of theology or religion. There is involved not only the idea of God as Jesus revealed Him, but such questions as, How help little children, boys and girls, young people, to have living fellowship with Him? How and when present older and cruder ideas of God? How help the pupil to interpret God in meeting his own life situations? The material is not only the Bible but hymns, liturgies, prayers, and all literature and experience in as far as they bear on this particular question. Theology is still Queen of the Sciences, but her work is distinct from that of religious education.

2. Since religious education aims at the development of human life of the highest type, it is essential to know the pupil very thoroughly. The native endowment of each person is the capital with which he must work, and the method must be in conformity with the laws of developing life. Thus psychology—genetic, abnormal, educational, social and religious—is surveyed and canvassed to see what light it throws upon the main issue. This is not claiming that psychology is a branch of religious education, any more than the fact that chemistry is so largely used in modern warfare makes chemistry a branch of the study of war. One may be a great psychologist without considering a single problem in religious education. He may be antagonistic to religious work. But whoever aims at engaging in Christian education must surely know, as intimately as human knowledge can lead him, the utmost he can discover about human life—persons in their

concrete situations—that he may most successfully co-operate with God in helping them attain their best life. Such questions as these arise: How use original life? What are the possibilities of defective and abnormal persons? How teach, *e.g.*, worship, so as to have behind it the inner "drives" or "urges"? How co-operate with the laws of learning in any desired religious teaching? How measure moral and religious growth?

3. But it has been discovered that no person exists by himself. In that sense "the individual" is an abstraction. Every person lives in a social sphere. Every action is performed in response to a concrete situation, and has social implications. If persons are to be educated, it must be in society and for social ends. But this means a most complex situation. Especially is this so in a time like the present, when things are changing so rapidly. What was thought to have been established is found to be in flux; the attitude to marriage; to the place of labour; to the responsibility of capital; to war; to international relations; to society. Old traditions and sanctions are breaking down. But religious education must help pupils live in such a world, and be a formative force in it.

The sociologist, *per se*, is interested in religion only in so far as it appears to him to be a social force. He is not concerned with conserving or propagating any one form of religion, or of religion itself. But this is precisely the interest of the religious educator. His whole aim is to promote the highest type of religious living.

But the unconscious influences playing upon one are among the most effective educational forces. There is, therefore, a double problem: How secure the best influences from the situation as it is, and how educate that the pupil may not only be an efficient member of society as it exists but be a constructive Christian force in the promotion of the ever-becoming civilisation? Here arise multitudinous problems in religious education: How develop religion in the family? In industry? In politics? In social life? How make the curriculum a series of life situations? How develop world fellowship, Christian internationalism, in practical affairs? All these and many other questions are engaging the attention, and for the most part, baffling religious workers. Profounder studies are called for along these and many other lines, where the researches in the social sciences make large contributions to religious education.

4. The Bible is the chief text book of the Christian religion. What is the Bible? What, precisely, is the meaning of each particular passage? When, by whom, under what circumstances, was it spoken or written? These and many similar questions are asked, and are being answered by Bible scholars. Because the Bible is so vital, everyone who believes in it is eager that the most profound research should be made along all these lines. It is only those who think it is like an idol of wood or stone, which may be broken, or may reveal that it is wood or stone and not a living message, who are afraid of, and resent criticism. But granted that all these prob-

lems were solved, the work of religious education in regard to the Bible would still remain. Its interest is, again, dynamic, vital, never static. It asks: How may we use the Bible so as to get the largest results in Christian living? What passages will best nourish and promote Christian living? What is the meaning of these sections to the pupils themselves? Here is a group of children under eight years of age. What portions of the Bible will meet their specific needs? Or this class of older boys or older girls, or these young people, or men and women? What is the best use to be made of the stories of Jesus for various ages? Of miracles? Of letters, etc.? These and similar problems were scarcely raised a dozen years ago, and they are by no means solved yet.

But one will not have gone very far in the study of the religious development of real, living persons until he will see that "boys" and "girls"; "young people"; "men and women" are not static things like bricks or mathematical formulae. Much depends upon the situation in which one is found. It is not enough to ask what will best help (say) boys and girls to live in the spirit of Jesus? The question must be much more specific, and be stated something like this: What will best help boys and girls of ten years of age, of English-speaking parents, in a New England rural community? The answer might differ considerably for persons of the same age of non-English speaking parents; or of English speaking parents living in the congested section of a great

city; or for those in Canada, in the West, in China, or in Iceland. The real test as to what material is suitable depends on the effect on the everyday life of the pupil. In all conclusions as to the use of the Bible much greater place must be given to a study of the actual results *in the lives of the pupils* of sections under consideration. Here little has been done as yet.

While the Bible is the chief source book, it is not the only source. Missions, literature, art, music, history, nature, science, industry, all the world, are aflame with God. Any student, eager to make a contribution to the world, will find here an almost unlimited opportunity for service.

5. Now even if one were thoroughly conversant with the results of the best scholarship on all these and related fields, he would still be far from his goal as a qualified worker in religious education. Grant that one knew very thoroughly a specific group of pupils, their sociological situation, the Christian teaching on essential doctrines, and the passages of Scripture and other material most suitable for their use, he might fail in his work. The great question still remains: How may we best deal with this group in order to get the best results? We are now in the domain of the science of education and the art of pedagogy.

Education is now one of the greatest fields of study. It has become scientific in its methods; and it forms perhaps the largest department of the leading universities. Its problems are vast: How should public schools be organised and administered? What ought to be taught to pupils

of various ages? (The whole complex question of the curriculum). What are the best methods of teaching each particular subject in each particular grade? How can education and intelligence be measured?

The student of religious education must know the theory and practice of education as it is being wrought out to-day. To be behind the times here would be inexcusable. Progress is very rapid, and changes come quickly. This is especially so in pedagogy. Methods of teaching are being revolutionised and standards of measurement and of experiment are being established.

History, the history of education alone, is a life study; but it is largely a history of religious education up to a century ago. The long story of mankind's attempt to pass on to the succeeding generation what it conceived to be of most worth must surely throw light on religious education to-day. In the history of religious education are many challenging issues awaiting the student's research.

6. While closely allied, the science of so-called secular education and the art of teaching are not identical with the problems of religious education. A good teacher or administrator in a public school may be by no means a good Sunday School teacher or superintendent, or vice versa. The two spheres are very different. There is a distinct technique of religious teaching and leadership, whether in the Sunday School or week-day school of religious education.

Among the pressing needs to-day are: the

discovery of what pupils actually learn in our schools of religion. It may be known what the teacher thinks he is teaching, but what is the influence that is being actually exerted on life? Again, what is the most effective way, measured in terms of the pupil's life, for worship to be conducted in any particular department? Another fundamental question is: What are the needs of the pupils of various ages? If this were answered, it would be much easier to provide effective programmes. This must be the approach. Too long have we either taught passages of Scripture selected at random or built up the curriculum on the basis of material, rather than on the needs of pupils. The value of art and music, literature, history, needs profound study. For example, it is comparatively easy in most communities to discover a good musician, even an authority on Church music; but how rare to find one who has skill in selecting suitable words and tunes for the various grades, and who knows how to teach and to use them in the development of Christian living! Then there remains the problem of training in leadership; the observation of teaching; the technique of teaching religion.

7. Religious education is making necessary a new study of ethics. If it is granted, and it cannot be, that we are clear as to ethical standards of living, it would still be true only of adult standards. But who has worked out in his own mind what are the functions of children of any particular age in society? What is the right conduct in definite life situations? Children have

their own codes in play, in school, in the home. What relation should these have to a programme of religious education? What is ethical for children of different stages of development?

8. But again, in all these problems we have been thinking of normal people. What study has been made of the blind? The deaf? The abnormal? The deficient? Do our religious leaders know what is being done for the religious development of these classes? When persons of this class are discovered we are apt to feel our duty is done if we can succeed in getting them into an institution. But what is provided in these institutions specifically to meet their deepest needs? There are many orphan asylums. What provision is made for the religious education of these children? Are members of the staff selected because of their expert knowledge in the development of the highest life of those under their care? What study has been made of what can be done to make up in some measure the lack of parents' love and care?

9. Then the growing demand for fuller religious education through the week is raising a flood of problems: of organisation; of methods of teaching; of curricula; of relationship to the Sunday programme, etc., and intensifies the long-standing need for the adequate preparation of teachers.

10. It should be clearly seen that all that has been suggested in this chapter touches the quick of every great enterprise of the Church. These may be thought of under the heads of

Evangelism, Home Missions, Foreign Missions, and Social Service. The Church's progress in every one of these fields depends directly and in exact proportion on her success in religious education. Yet no one pretends to believe that an adequate programme is now provided that children and youth may live in the spirit of Jesus.

What care has been given, as yet, to religious education in the mission fields at home or abroad? Yet just here, it must be acknowledged, lies the surest road to a new civilisation. And if the Church is to be filled with those who know world needs and practise Christian stewardship, obviously the training must come in youth.

Social workers are coming to see that social work which is not educational is unsound. Many have come to realise that it must also be religious. But what study has been made of an adequate programme of religious education for social service centres, or even for the Sunday School? Every one of these mighty enterprises calls for the most painstaking study and research.

It is clear that every phase touched upon reveals or suggests vast unexplored areas. The extent of the work needed in religious education is almost immeasurable, it is so great. But it may be objected that it seems to be built up of other disciplines, or that it consists in left-overs from them. Now the interdependence seen here is no more striking than in any other science or art. Take for example astronomy. It seems to stand peculiarly by itself. But the merest introduction to astronomy shows it to be most closely

interwoven with, and dependent on mathematics, optics, physics, chemistry, spectroscopy, photography, etc. The astronomer must know these studies. They are entirely different from his interests. But he uses their discoveries in ways beyond their spheres and reveals the wonders of the stars. And what is true of the interdependence of religious education and astronomy upon other sciences and arts, is true of every science and every art.

Religious education is bringing religious teaching face to face with life. It is one thing to work out, let us say, a theory of God, and set it forth in logical terms; but it is quite another thing to face a group of pupils, full of life, vitality, power, and help them to know God. It is one thing to talk about the tens of thousands who perished so suddenly in the earthquake in Japan; it is quite another thing to interpret the great mystery of death to boys and girls, or to those who have seen death invade the home circle. It is not difficult to teach a lesson and to drill in memory work; it is a different matter to select the best material, and to use it so that the pupils may be helped to achieve fuller and richer development.

Religious education is leading inevitably to a re-examination of the idea of God, and of all religious doctrine *in the light of the teaching of Jesus;* and to a reconstruction of lessons and processes in the light of pupils' nature and needs. The best correction of bad theology is a proper understanding of God as He reveals Himself in

Jesus and in the life of children, of youth, and of grown-ups.

In every field, religious education bases its work on the reliability and rationality of God, and seeks to co-operate *intelligently* with Him in carrying out His purposes as revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus, until the unspeakable blessing of loving fellowship with the Father is the glad experience of every one in all parts of the earth.

It is this test of reality at the touch stone of life that is one of the potent influences in the religious life of to-day, calling for a reconstruction of our conceptions of religion and of society, not according to the findings of the Councils and creeds of the past necessarily, but according to the teaching of Jesus. That same test has led the world to see that the future is in the keeping of the children, and that they who nurture and develop them are creating the civilisation that is to be. The Churches that are efficient in religious education are consciously working together with God in making the world what He wants it to be.

But granted, as every one must, that religious education is confronted with innumerable problems, the solution of any one of which would materially affect the Churches' work and modify the course of civilisation, does that constitute *Content*? The question answers itself. How long would any science last which had not vital problems? Just as long as some institution or interest protected it; no longer. Every science—education, mechanics, medicine, astronomy,

chemistry—is a science because it is cramfull of challenges in the way of unsolved problems. Technique develops in the process of discovery, experiment and classification. Astronomy, one of the oldest studies, has a very long ancestry, going back to astrology. But religious education has a longer family history; a greater mass of material and technique; and an infinitely greater number of vital contacts. As with every science, much of the old must be reconsidered, sifted, perhaps discard, so here. But for twenty years this process has been going on with extraordinary rapidity, so that there is now a new literature on the subject, new methods of investigation and study, new curricula and organisations.

For many years the technique of preaching and of the evangelistic campaign has been worked out. Now religious education is attempting to discover the best method for promoting the full, rich life as Jesus revealed it, in little children, youth, and in grown-ups as well. It is the greatest enterprise into which God has asked humanity to enter as fellow workers with Himself.

The conservatism of the great universities in admitting new studies into the curriculum, and especially in accepting them as fields for research leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is well-known. The fact that many of the leading universities accept religious education as a field of study for the Doctor's degree is the most emphatic way of stating that they feel the content of religious education is worthy of their highest recognition.

Religious education aims at developing the highest and best life both of the individual and of society. From the point of view of complexity, of profundity, and of significance, this study has few if any equals. The only work in the world of permanent significance is helping persons attain their best and highest selves, and, for the Christian, this best and highest life is found revealed in Jesus the Christ. The promotion of this by the fullest and most intelligent co-operation with God is the aim of religious education.

CHAPTER VII.

The Programme of Religious Education.

ONE of the greatest services religion may render is to help to unify life and give it direction in seeking the highest values. Then the programme must touch all of life, as has been insisted on, and be itself unified. At the present time this cannot be claimed because of scrappy courses and competing organisations. Too often it tends rather to distract and divide than to unite the pupil's experiences in one strong, purposeful enterprise. What is demanded is, at the least, a well-wrought-out, comprehensive scheme, and an efficient organisation administered by trained leaders.

In a unified programme of religious education there must be the three elements of Worship, Instruction, and Training. These must not be thought of as separate entities, but as elements in a life process. Bark, fibre, sap, are three elements in a tree. But separated they are no longer alive, and added together they do not make a living tree. It is only for purposes of

analysis and study that they can be separated. So the worship, instruction, and training are elements in a single life process. A Church in making its plans must see that all three elements are provided in a programme of vital experience. Let us consider some of these more important points in turn.

I. Worship.

(1) The essential thing in worship is the consciousness of the presence of God. "Practise the presence of God" said the saintly Brother Lawrence. This is one of the aims of every religious educator. Training in worship, where this is lacking, misses its end.

(2) The second is the Christian attitude towards God. It is possible to be conscious of God's presence and have anything but the attitude Jesus had. Worship should help the worshipper to feel that he is in the Father's house, and to have the impulse to love and serve Him.

(3) Training in worship aims at developing the attitudes mentioned, and also at helping the pupil to express adequately his own response to God's love. For example, a child may feel deeply the goodness of God as, let us say, developed in the Sunday lesson. What he needs is opportunity and help in adequately expressing his feeling.

(4) In class and common worship the service ought to be the expression of the pupils' own feeling and attitude, and not merely of the teacher or leader. This is one reason why it is difficult

to lead the worship of a group separated from oneself by serious differences of experience. It is usually much easier for an adult to conduct worship for grown-ups than for children.

According to some theories the leader (or priest) performs worship *for* the congregation. This is certainly not the theory on which training in worship is based. There is a vast difference between saying prayers for children, or even teaching them to say prayers, and teaching them to pray.[1] Here the emphasis is upon stimulating and guiding the pupils to express their own response to God in words, in acts, and in life.

Worship is a universal characteristic of man in all ages. It is not something grafted on by priestcraft. It is one of the expressions of his religious nature. It is of great importance to the religious educator to recognise clearly that worship is a *natural response* to a felt need. Hunger can be met only by nourishment; so this demand of man's nature can be satisfied only by worship. It is not necessary to attempt to create the readiness to worship. It is an inherent outreach of life.

Another significant thing for the educator to remember is that worship has been maintained through the centuries because it was found to be of *value* by the worshippers. Teaching and tradition played their part, but together they could maintain such a practice for only a brief

1. Cp., Edith E. Read Mumford, "How we can Help Children to Pray." (Longmans, Green, London, 1924); and "The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child." (Longmans, Green, 1915.)

period, unless people had found satisfaction in it. As soon as the sense of its worthwhileness is lost it becomes hollow and artificial. If worship is to be a power in the lives of pupils, it must be vitalised; must bring satisfaction *to the group worshipping*. Are religious leaders willing to judge the success of their worship-periods in the Sunday School by this test?

If worship, as carried on, really meets needs, and is felt to be of value, it is comparatively easy to develop the habit of communing with God whenever any need is felt. These needs arise in the regular work-a-day week. And so worship becomes a part of the every day life, a part of life itself.

These considerations throw a good deal of light on the culture of worship. If it is a natural response of man to felt needs, the first obvious suggestion is to make use of situations when they arise where worship is the natural response. These are constantly arising.) A child may be thrilled over a bud or flower or baby chick. His whole soul bubbles over with wonder, joy, parental tenderness, love. Here is a delightful picture of such a situation, given by Rev. T. Grigg-Smith, in "How to Teach and Organise in the Sunday School."[1]

"One of the hens hatched out a solitary chick the other day, the first for months and months. I do not think Awui had ever seen a newly hatched "kokorerek" before, and we

1. Society for Propagation of Christian Knowledge. (Macmillan, 1923, p. 9.)

went together early in the morning, to see the miracle. He fell, instantly, on his knees in the wet grass, like some pilgrim who has reached the shrine, and, careless of the furious, frightened rushes of the mother hen he apostrophised the bewitching little yellow thing—talking to it and singing about it, in a language which had no meaning at all for me, except that I was sure that it was pure poetry; and I stood there and watched him, and listened to the new and various tones of his voice, which is beautiful at all times, but indescribably rich and thrilling then. Only a little brat of a Papuan boy, and a baby barndoor fowl, in an overgrown patch of wet grass on the edge of a swamp!—but they were held close, for a passing moment, in the very heart of beauty and poetry and wonder and music."

Situations arise in class where prayer is the natural response. These will be taken advantage of by the wise teacher. Jesus was a Master at taking advantage of the occasional: a chance meeting at the well[1]; an interruption in his teaching[2]; a farmer sowing.[3]

Such situations should also be created or arranged, such as facing a task that seems too large; the consciousness of human need; anxiety over the success of a meeting or of an enterprise; the problem of planning a worship programme.

Through all the work the attempt must constantly be made to establish the habit of

1. John iv. 6ff.
2. Matt. xii. 46ff; Mark iii. 31ff.
3. Matt. xiii. 3ff.

worship at set times; participation in public worship; and also of communion with God at work and at play. Worship, as suggested here, can concern itself only with the interests of the group, and will be expressed in their own terms. Only in this way can they feel its value and voluntarily participate.

This is not the place to discuss how to plan the worship, but one or two things may be suggested. Any period of worship should aim at meeting some definite need or reaching one distinct result. Around this aim or theme the whole programme should be built. Every item will then be chosen, not only because it expresses the feelings and aspirations of the group, but also because it bears out the central aim. Aimless worship is as bad as aimless preaching or aimless teaching.

II. The Curriculum.

The pupils' experience is the unifying factor. Everything must be built up around that, or rather the course of studies should consist in the pupils' life experiences and purposes. Religious education is a programme of experience in living, and is not merely a preparation for something in the future. The curriculum therefore attempts to present life situations and to stimulate and give guidance to the pupil in making the right responses.

This shifts the whole basis of curriculum building. It is a new aspect of an age-long problem that changes with the centuries. It is now

a much more difficult problem than the selection of the right material. It is the problem of conducting the pupil step by step through the typical and significant experiences of *his own life*, and helping him to interpret them in the spirit of Jesus. This is the most effective way of helping him achieve the character which is Christian in fact as well as in name.

Some beginnings have been made in this method of curriculum building, both in general and in religious education.[1] But a very great deal of experiment and study will be required to bring it to anything like perfection. This should rather spur on experimenters and students than stay them. Here is a great field, promising rich harvests. By actual experiment it is claimed that "the curriculum can be selected *entirely* from the purposes of boys and girls in real life."[2] There are, however, a good many difficulties in the way before the new kind of curriculum can be worked out on a large scale.[3]

Education is training *in living*, and is not a preparation for future living only. But it is very

1. In religious education an approach has been made in the "Canadian Standard Programme" for boys 12-17 (Toronto), and "Canadian Girls in Training" (Ryerson Press); also in the corresponding "Christian Citizenship Training Programme of the United States" (Association Press). "The Mayflower Programme Books" and the "Junior Citizen" (Pilgrim Press), and "Explorations in God's World Round About Us" (Ryerson Press) types of books for the younger children show tendencies in the same direction.

2. Collings, "An Experiment with a Project Curriculum." (Macmillan, New York, 1923.)

3. A. J. Wm. Myers, "A Curriculum of Experience? Religious Education." (August, 1924, p. 232.)

strongly held that the only adequate preparation for future living is living well to-day. The best, and indeed, only way to insure, as far as is humanly possible, that a child of three will be strong when he is twenty-one is by keeping him in the best possible health to-day. It is poor policy to give him food to-day, either physical or intellectual, that he cannot digest (or is not suited to him) until he is grown up.

Religious education is carried on *for the pupil.* It is pupilcentered. Every bit of material must be measured by this standard: Is this the best available material for the promotion of their own best and highest life at this particular time or stage in their development? No material, whatever its source, has any other divine right than this. The probable effect on the development of Christlike character is the first standard of selection.

Then all the material that is used must be true to Jesus' idea of God, and of the kind of life and of society that pleases Him. This criterion will cut out a great many of the generally accepted Bible passages,[1] hymns and prayers. Too long have trusting little children been given Jewish and pagan ideas of God simply because such notions are taught in parts of the Bible.

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1. A. J. Wm. Myers, "The Old Testament in the Sunday School." (Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1912.) It is illuminating to compare with the findings of this study the Bible material selected for use in the grades in schools in England and Scotland and in some courses for use in the Sunday and "Vacation Bible Schools" of the United States. See also Chapter I. of this book.

God's whole universe is His book. He reveals himself in the Bible, in history, and in literature, in art and in music, in nature and in science, in the factory and in all the daily occupations of everyday life. Out of this storehouse, so rich and varied in its contents, the wise steward brings both what is old and new.

All material must be meaningful to the pupil. There is no reason or excuse for teaching anything to pupils that is meaningless in the hope that some day it may be of use. Generally the mistake is made not so much of presenting "advanced" material as of presenting what is foreign to the pupil's whole world of experience. For example, children who have been given a taste of pageantry will voluntarily study and enjoy Shakespeare, at an age when in some schools they are being fed on insipid rhymes because it is believed that they cannot appreciate the best. In how many Sunday Schools are pupils, children and adults, allowed to use only doggerel verse set to worse tunes, because it seems to be thought that "classical," or good music and words are too hard! Only the best is good enough for use in religious education.

III. Methods of Teaching.

The principles already enunciated call for corresponding modification in the conduct of the school. The school must be as much like life as possible. The progress already made in this direction may be somewhat appreciated by comparing the present-day kindergarten, or the

industrial arts and crafts departments, with the ordinary school of a hundred years ago. Artificiality is bad in education, but fatal in religious education. Many Sunday Schools do not show much resemblance to life situations. They are highly artificial, and what is done in class is exceedingly abstract, and far removed from daily life. That hiatus, wherever it exists, is the finest kind of training for the same thing in life—when business is one thing and religion something else, to be indulged in, if at all, only on special occasions.

In religion the only kind of control that is aimed at is self-control, and the only kind of service that which springs from one's own motives. All methods, then, are judged by the degree to which they stimulate pupils to do what is right because they themselves want to, that is, because of their own voluntary choice. Some of the desiderata of good teaching then are: first hand contact with human need; an intelligent grasp of the situation; freedom to initiate measures; to plan and execute them; responsibility for the results; the joy and satisfaction of achievement. Training along these lines is effective in producing the desired character, the intelligent Christian who knows the need and who seeks to meet the need because of the urge of his own heart.

For the best training it is not only necessary to have pupils initiate enterprises, but do the work well, and carry it through to completion. These are two qualities that make for success in all walks of life. When a thing is completed it

should be judged objectively. For a pupil or group to judge whether the work is up to standard, or as good as the sample, is very much better both for the pupils and for the teacher than to have the teacher pass judgment. The vigour and zeal with which groups put through their own undertakings should convince the most sceptical that here is a force which merely needs to be harnessed. Those who have had the courage to try, and wisdom in execution, have found that pupils of all ages delight in nothing more than in carrying through some worth-while enterprise for some good cause. The method which best embodies these principles is know under various names, and has been practised in various ways and places for many years. It is now commonly method, the seminar. The essential thing is that pupils are free to initiate, to plan, to think together, to carry through to completion, to judge known as the project principle,[1] the laboratory objectively, to be responsible for results, and feel the thrill of achievement whether the end is satisfying or disappointing.

The Christian is a seeker after truth. Method must stimulate enquiry, provide facilities for prosecuting it and give incentive to pursue it to the end. The Christian is not afraid of truth. God is truth. What is truth is of God. Too often enquiry and investigation has been shut off in the name of religion, and the seekers put to

1. There are many books and articles on the subject. John Alford Stevenson, "The Project Method of Teaching." (Macmillan, New York, 1921.) Wm. H. Kilpatrick, and many others.

death. Galileo discovered that the earth revolved. This theory upset traditional beliefs. The hierarchy did not ask, Is it the fact? That was not their concern. This is always so with traditionalists. The Christian wants the truth. Did a certain event happen as it is recorded? Is the story of the raising of Lazarus true as told in John? Was Abraham an individual? Why not question the creeds? Is the substitutionary theory of the atonement in keeping with the character of God as revealed by Jesus? What good is a creed unless it expresses convictions, and how can it express convictions unless it is tested? If a group undertakes to work out its own code, and attempts to state its own beliefs, it may find that historic documents come nearer their ideas than they ever could had they been forced to believe by some process of coercion. The scientific method is essential, and the open mind is one of the finest fruits of education.

From the above discussion it should be clear the the whole process of religious education is unified, and embraces worship, instruction, and training in a single education process. The chief work of this education is to guide life experience and help the pupil interpret his whole life in relation to God and His Kingdom.

CHAPTER VIII.

Organisation, Agencies, and Leadership.

RELIGIOUS education involves the development of the whole person. It means the freeing, releasing of latent capacities. The Church is guardian or trustee. The child's heritage is the Kingdom of God. The Church's duty is to see that every child enters fully into his heritage. The kingdom exists wherever people live together as the family of God. That is the kind of life the Church seeks for every one in the world.

As guardian the Church does not have to do all of the work directly itself. It must see that it is done. For example, in most places the general education is provided by State (or private) schools. The home and the State usually look after the physical needs; and so on. But where these and other needs are not being met the Church assumes the fully responsibility. This is most clearly seen on the foreign mission fields, where schools, hospitals, dispensaries, are provided, and people are taught to build houses and

to carry on industries. The Church has been divinely guided in recognising that the care of the life in its entirety is the function of religion.

In its educational work, that is the work of the Sunday School in the broadest sense, this conception will call for definite organisation. The exact work will depend on the community. But in every case the organisation should be simple and unified. Thinking of the ordinary Christian community, these principles seem to hold.

(1) Each homogeneous age and intelligence group should be considered as a unit. For this the well-established grades and departments of the Sunday School, modified to meet local conditions, are sufficiently accurate. The needs of the group being understood, the group should be organised so as best to meet these needs. That is, the thinking must be in terms of the group and its needs, and not in terms of organisations. Take, let us say, the Junior group. It needs to be trained in worship; in expression; in study, along various lines. If the group is organised, and meets on Sunday and once or twice through the week, all the work can be accomplished. On Sunday this group would comprise the Junior department of the Sunday School, and through the week the same group would carry on a rich and varied programme of service and other expressional activities. Under the same general leadership, even if the same persons might not always be able to be present at both the Sunday and the week-day meetings, with a single educa-

tional programme the group has a sense of unity which greatly strengthens the influence of the Sunday School on their lives.

In addition there needs to be regular week-day religious education. In Great Britain it has long been carried on in the public schools. In the United States this seems to be impossible. But the plan which is gaining headway there is to have it in connection with the public school.[1] Pupils, whose parents so request, are released from school on condition that they attend the school of religion provided by their own or some other Churches. The week-day school is provided by each Church or denomination, or by a group, or by all working together.

Under this scheme[2] the whole programme of religious education is unified. It is all under the direction of the Church or Churches, and is comprised in one single organisation.

None of the work is handed over to an outside organisation, such as boys' brigades, bands of mercy, mission circles, etc. Whatever is needed for a full, rounded programme is included in the curriculum, as an integral part, and is not added as an extra. In this way the pupil does not get the impression that religion is one thing, missions another, temperance something else, and play, sport, and "good times," a different thing altogether. Gaps are also avoided, and the over-emphasis on one thing to the exclusion of the

1. Cope, "The Week Day Church School." (Doran, New York, 1921.)

2. This plan is well presented in Walter A. Squires' "A Parish Programme of Religious Education." (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1923.)

other equally important matters. But one of the most obvious results is the doing away with overlapping (several agencies and organisations doing much the same thing) and with a multiplicity of organisations, each with its own centre, its literature, its loyalties. Far too often pupils have a larger loyalty for some organisation, which ministers to but a single phase of their nature, than to the Church. There, let us say, they have a good time; in the Church a pokey time. What we must do is to help them to have the very best time under the influence of religion, and build up but one loyalty. The effect is to unify life; and this is one of the proper functions of religion.

Week-day religious education includes, besides the regular classes held in school or in connection with the public school, as indicated above, Church vacation schools.[1] These take advantage of the leisure time of children when the public schools are closed. Their success has been great, and the number of schools is multiplying rapidly. Meeting every day for from four to six weeks, for five hours a day, about as much time is given to religious education as is comprised in a whole year in the regular Sunday School. These schools are filled with activity where the pupils study, play, worship, and work together. Properly carried on, these vacation schools help the pupils to live together in the spirit of Christ.

If a Church or community plans to unify its work, and simplify its organisation, as here

1. See the literature published by the various Denominations, and by the Daily Vacation Bible School Association.

suggested, it is necessary to select a committee of, say, five persons, chosen because of their knowledge and skill in religious education. This committee should canvass the whole situation and, through consultation with leaders and with the heads of the departments in the Sunday School and other organisations of the Church, lay out a programme for the ensuing two or three years. In their scheme a balanced emphasis would be given to every necessary activity, such as Bible study, missions, temperance, health, play, recreation, Christian service, etc., in one unified, rounded programme. What was done one year would be built upon the past, and look forward to the future, as in any educational syllabus. Everything could not be covered in one year, but might be in a cycle of three years. For example, in an older class the life experiences for one year might be interpreted in the light of the life of Jesus; the next mainly with reference to the New Testament; and the next to the Old Testament. Over a period of years, if the material is taken up properly, the pupils should have a vital grasp of the essential things in the whole Bible, and of the Bible as a whole, a thing most to be desired and seldom attained under present methods. The same is true of missions, social service, and all the enterprises of the Church, because these are not treated as separate entities but contribute to the solution of life situations. Some such simplification and unification is essential if the task of religious education is to be accomplished. And the whole future of the Church and of

civilisation depends on how well the present generation does its great work.

Agencies.

There are four outstanding agencies in the development of life: the home, the school and playground, the Church and the community. The most effective work cannot be done until these are closely aligned in a common objective. All interested in the development of Christian character find here a challenge. Success here will mark one of the greatest advances in the whole enterprise. At present, it too often happens that one agency pulls against the other and neutralises its effect.

(1) The home is universally acknowledged the most formative influence in the life of the young child. The character of the parents, their mental and nervous condition, the harmony and happiness in the home, its beauty or squalor—all these, and a thousand other subtle influences, play upon the child day after day. Who can estimate the effect of the first impressions the child receives on opening his eyes in this world? Researches to-day seem to show that these impressions are even more indelible and formative than was formerly believed to be the case. And these years are all under the direct care of the home.

The home needs help. The State, the public school, departments of health, etc., have, during the last few years rendered great service to the home, especially in regard to the physical care of children. The Church has not made much

success in its efforts to help in their moral and religious care. Yet there are obvious services it ought to render, as, for example:—

(*a*) Helping parents of young children. The Cradle or Font Roll provides the organisation necessary, and tends to enlist the sympathy of the parents. Most parents feel the need of help. What games are best? What stories? How deal with a child who tells what is not true to fact? How should one treat fits of temper? These, and a thousand other questions, perplex every parent.

While it is true that parents of young children need help, and are usually conscious of their need, most parents of adolescent children are not less perplexed. It does seem that classes for parents, where practical, every-day problems are discussed sympathetically under an intelligent leader, would be of vast service. It should not be a lecture course but a discussion class, where each would be free to state his problems and offer his suggestions. Several of the Denominational publishing houses have very good books for just such classes.

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(*b*) Taking the home into partnership. Too often the Church seeks to have the home co-operate with it in its programme. But why should it? The home has its own ideas and its own wisdom. When the Church plans its educational work the home should be one of the partners, and the two should work out the plan together. There is one common, unifying bond —the love of the children. Sitting down together, thinking through the common problems, drawing

up a scheme for the year, seeing the enterprise from the same general point of view—perhaps no one thing would so enlist the home and get it solidly behind the educational work of the Church. It is altogether likely also that the Church workers would gain quite as much from these conferences as the parents.

It must never be forgotten that parents are the real teachers. Consciously and unconsciously their teaching goes on every day and many hours each day. If in full sympathy with the Church work, as they are more apt to be if they have had a hand in shaping it, they can help specifically in such ways as the following: by helping the pupils with their lessons; teaching them memory work; being interested in the Sunday School; helping the pupils in their service activities; observing and reporting on attitudes and characteristics of their children and on their reactions to what is taught. When the programme is worked out together there is real stimulus to observe, test and measure the results of what is being done in school upon the life and conduct of the children. This is one of the real needs of to-day if religious education is to find its way to better things.

(*c*) Securing thorough, scientific sex-education for boys and girls. Much of the character of the homes of the future depends on the attitudes and ideals of the boys and girls to-day. Both receive education along these lines. It is inevitable. If picked up on the street and playground it is apt to be inaccurate and impure. This education should be begun before puberty,

and it ought to be taken up from the *human* point of view. It is not necessary to lead up to it by a long and circuitous route through nature and the animal world. The facts of human generation are as pure and sacred as those of animals and plants.

(*d*) Establishing ideals of the Christian home. There are many things that give low ideals of home life. The Church ought to have its young people studying definitely about the ideals and duties of the home. In this way it would help prepare them for life's greatest undertaking—the making of a home.

(2) The importance of the school and playground in character formation is universally acknowledged. Every educator is aware that the aim of school work is moral character. The school and Church have, in part, a common objective, but they are often ignorant of, or indifferent to each other's work. These two and the home should, of course, be bound together in the closest unity. For centuries the best schools in Great Britain have trained their pupils in living. They have cultivated health, sport, fair play, love for the out-of-doors, and intellectual and moral integrity. What the best schools are doing all schools should do. This will include:—

(*a*) Health education and care. Medical and dental examination; clinics; visiting nurses; provision for under-nourished children, etc. These are some of the essentials.

(*b*) Supervised recreation. Play is no longer looked upon as waste of time, but as one of

the greatest educational activities. The development of the love of sport—as different as day is from night from athleticism, where a team is picked and trained to *win games*, while the multitude sit and look on—is one of the needs from the point of view of religious education.

(*c*) Vital education. Nothing will take the place of an education which helps the pupil live. The school which helps the pupil to think, and to love knowledge, and to work happily with his fellows is laying some of the foundations of a lasting civilisation.

(*d*) Moral education.[1] This is promoted indirectly and directly in such ways as the following: The conduct of the school itself;[2] the character-developing value of the school subjects, such as mathematics, history, literature, etc.; the school code. This last is one of the most formative forces in the whole school life. Does the school code countenance tattling, fighting, copying? What is the conception of honour in sports, in work, in the relations between pupils and teacher, etc.?

In addition many schools have more direct teaching. Courses in civics are really, if well prepared, courses in morals. Then the teaching of history and of great literature is always moral, and the teaching ought to be brought out early. Specific courses in morals, when conducted vitally and not formally, have had fine results.

1. See Sir Michael Sadler, "Moral Instruction and Training in Schools," 2 vols. (Longman's, London, 1908.)
2. Compare Dewey, "School and Society," and his other books on education.

(*e*) Religious education. In some schools, as already pointed out, religious education has been carried on for generations. But it must be again emphasised that Bible instruction is not to be identified with religious education. But even where religious education cannot be taught, two things may be done which are effective. Opening worship is usually permissible. And everywhere the religious spirit and atmosphere may be developed. Against these there is no law. Where they do not exist anything in the name of religious education will be a farce; where they are, there already obtain most effective religious influences.

(3) The community, it is coming to be clearly seen, is one of the great educational agencies. In every community are many organisations which stand ready to help each in its own way. One of the real services the Church can perform is to bring the persons in need of help into touch with these associations. For example, there may be a neglected blind, dumb or deficient child in the neighbourhood. The parents do not know what to do with him. Others do not care. But the Church cares, and should know just what agencies exist, and how to get in touch with them. Its aim is to bring to him all the help possible that will promote his best development.

Again the influence of the community is all pervasive. Everything counts. Such things as the way the streets are kept; the state of the lawns and back yards; the shrubs and flowers around the houses; the care of birds; the conditions of the church, school and other public property; the

cinema and other theatre houses; the posters advertising pictures and plays; the public library; the attitude to business integrity, political purity, and to moral questions—all these stamp themselves upon the life of the people.

Of course, evil things must be fought. There is no possible defence for the existence of such moral plague spots as the low down theatre and public dance hall; the red light district; and the open saloon. No community and no nation with any regard for the rights of childhood, national character and the civilisation of the future can tolerate these and similar forces of evil, any more than they can tolerate contaminated water supply, or germ and plague-breeding sink-holes and swamps.

Leadership.

For religious education as now understood the word leadership must have a new content. This work is calling to itself some of the ablest educators and religious leaders, and is taxing their powers to the utmost. Indeed, no one feels himself equal to the high emprise. The time has gone by when the search was for devices. The search now is for principles. Sleight of hand and short-cut methods are no longer popular among intelligent people. This is true in all fields of intelligently directed human activity. See an article on "The Doom of the Self-Made Man," by Richard J. Walsh, in *The Century Magazine*, December, 1924. Education, it is recognised, is a slow process; but, like the oak, it is enduring.

It is evident that experience alone will not fit

one to lead. The experience of the past does not touch many of the most vital processes of the present. For the new education new leaders are required. As in the war, a new situation calls for a new training. A brief outline of the agencies and organisations through which Church people may secure the necessary training is here given.

(1) Advanced professional training is necessary for the leaders. First-class professional schools[1] and universities,[2] usually in co-operation with theological seminaries, give courses, leading to the higher degrees (including the Doctor's). Students who qualify for these degrees are graduates of colleges, and also, usually, of theological seminaries. The larger Churches are employing Directors of Religious education as associates with the minister.

(2) The minister is the key to the situation in the congregation. If he is an educator almost anything can be accomplished in the way of religious education. But it is no secret that too often the great stumbling block to any advance is the minister. This is not to be wondered at altogether, for during a seven-year course in arts and theology he has been kept high and dry from any contact with child life. He has been steeped in the adult way of looking at things, and abstract things at that. Such a course is calculated to send the theological students out neither knowing

1. Such as Westhill, Selly Oak, Birmingham, England, The Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy, Hartford, Conn., U.S.A.

2. Such as Columbia University, New York; University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., and many others.

nor caring whether children exist or not. They can know nothing of the modern world of religious education. They naturally become an effective block to all progress in the local Church.

What the Church demands is that every Theological College or Seminary give as good a course in religious education as it gives in Old or New Testament or any other discipline, and that every student put at least as much time each year of his course, on this as on any other subject. This requires regularly endowed chairs,[1] as in the other departments.

It should be enough, in justification of this demand, to remind the seminaries that about eight out of every ten who have joined the Church have done so before they were twenty years of age, and that only one out of a thousand has done so after thirty. It is quite evident that many Churches put the emphasis on the wrong place. Theological graduates, ignorant of the science and art of religious education, are as culpable as medical graduates, ignorant of modern materia medica and modern surgery.

(3) In addition to a trained director and a minister, who has had a good course in religious education, there is increasing call for special workers who are professionally trained, such as children's workers, boys' or girls' worker, etc.

1. Practically all the leading Theological Seminaries in the United States have chairs or Departments of Religious Education. Several in Canada are similarly staffed. The Congregational Theological Colleges of England and Wales had, for three years, one professor who gave short courses in each college. But this work has been dropped.

These receive their training in school and universities, as suggested under (1). There is a rapidly increasing demand for thoroughly trained persons for such positions in Churches and in field work, colleges, etc.

(4) But much of the work must yet be done by volunteers. While many of these can never take a special course at a training school, still they must seek training even if of a less thorough kind. For volunteer workers the following, among other ways, of seeking to improve their own skill are, or should be, available.

(*a*) The Normal Class. This should exist in every school. It meets as an integral part of the Sunday School and is composed of promising young people who would like, or are expected to teach in the local school.

(*b*) The Teacher Training Class is for all those who now teach, and for any prospective teachers. It is necessarily held at some other time than at the regular Sunday School hour. It is a good plan for neighbouring Churches to combine and have a union class.

(*c*) Community Training Schools or Institutes[1] are recommended for larger places. Here the Churches unite and put on a school usually for ten weeks before and ten weeks after Christmas. Two teaching periods are usually held every night, with one or more classes at each period.[2] These

1. Walter S. Athearn, The City Institute for Religious Teachers, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1915.

2. The churches in Canada and United States have agreed on a New Standard Teacher Training Course. The text books are used for (a), (b), and (c).

institutes are held each year, and at the completion of a certain number of courses a certificate is received.

(*d*) The Summer School, or Summer Assembly, is one of the most effective means for training teachers. For about ten days a group of like-minded people living together—studying, worshipping, playing, together—with minds and hearts intent upon the same things under the best leadership, makes an impression and gives an inspiration that is often a turning point in the lives of young people and teachers. Usually there are a dozen or more courses arranged on a three-year schedule. When completed a diploma is given.

(*e*) Local institutes bring the best the Denomination or Sunday School Association or Council of Religious Education has to offer to the local Church. One, two, or three-day institutes dealing with specific local problems are of great value to the local workers.

(*f*) Local and larger area Sunday School Conventions have proved their usefulness for generations.

(*g*) Boys' and girls' camps are becoming more and more training camps for training in leadership for the Church. Helping these young persons to work and lead in their own classes and organisations is one of the best ways of training for teaching later. When organised as suggested above it is evident that the camps become part of a well-worked-out educational programme.

(*h*) The workers' conference cannot be omitted in any Church. Once a month, teachers, officers, and delegates, from the older classes meet, usually for supper, and then discuss some question of vital interest such as the lessons for next year, special problems in the school, new books, grading, etc., or follow a course of study, or have an occasional speaker. Similarly each department will need its staff meetings. Such meetings are comparable to staff meetings in the army or directors' meetings in business.

(*i*) A library, however small, of the best books, is indispensable. Book reviews at the workers' conference is a good way to get books read. In these reviews, each of three or four people review a third or quarter of some important book.

(*j*) Correspondence courses are available at colleges and at denominational headquarters. In some cases these count towards a degree. The person who cannot get away to school or institute is not necessarily deprived of the advantage of study under competent direction.

(*k*) Many local workers could take a term or special courses at a training school. If possible a full year or more should be taken.

(*l*) But no amount of specific training can make up for, or take the place of, thorough and appropriate education, step by step, from the beginners up. Any serious gap is as much of a handicap here as it is in general education. It takes years to develop a real teacher.

From this outline it is clear that there are

many opportunities for a Church and for each teacher to perfect the work of teaching.

It goes without saying that only persons of the best Christian character are to be enlisted as teachers and officers. Goethe said, "Character calls forth character."

Some say "Religion is caught, not taught," and use this as an excuse for not training teachers. But if religion is caught why train ministers? Why teach little children the Bible, or to pray? Why did Jesus teach His disciples? Why did He use the highest art in His teaching, so high that it is the despair and inspiration of teachers to this day?

Education seeks to develop whatever native capacity a person has. He who has great natural aptitude is helped mightily by grasping the scientific principles, and he who would otherwise have been a failure is enabled, by training, to do respectable work. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,"[1] are wise words to every teacher, however great, or however small is his original capacity as a teacher. Only by the consecration of our best can we hope to finish the work the Master expects us to do. Only so will be brought in the new civilisation which He called the Kingdom of God.

1. II. Tim. ii. 15. First and Second Timothy is one of the greatest treatises on religious education and on leadership training.

Printed by the Sidney Press, Bedford, Great Britain.

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What is religious education?

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